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LITTLE FLOWERS

OF A CHILDHOOD



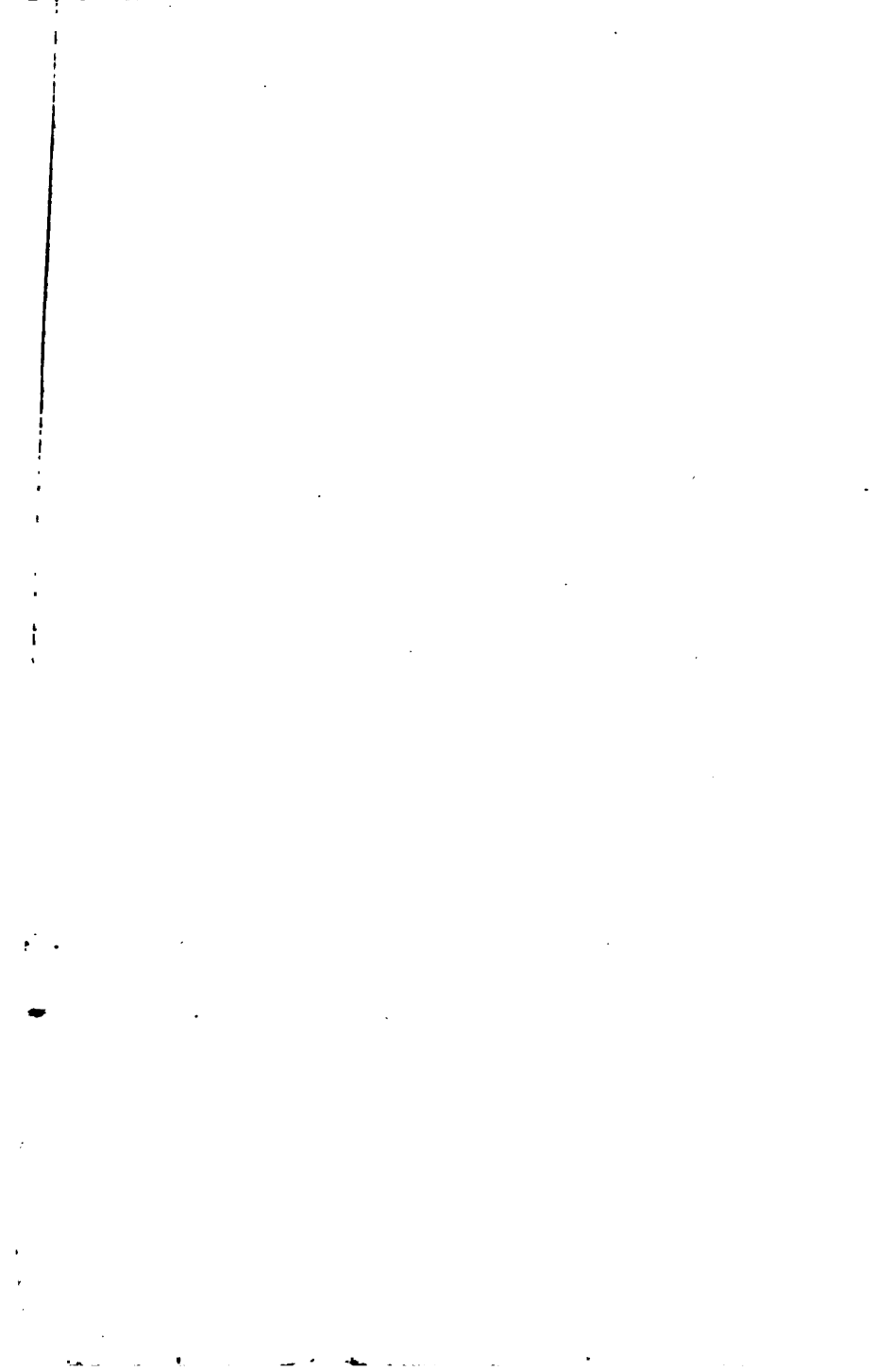
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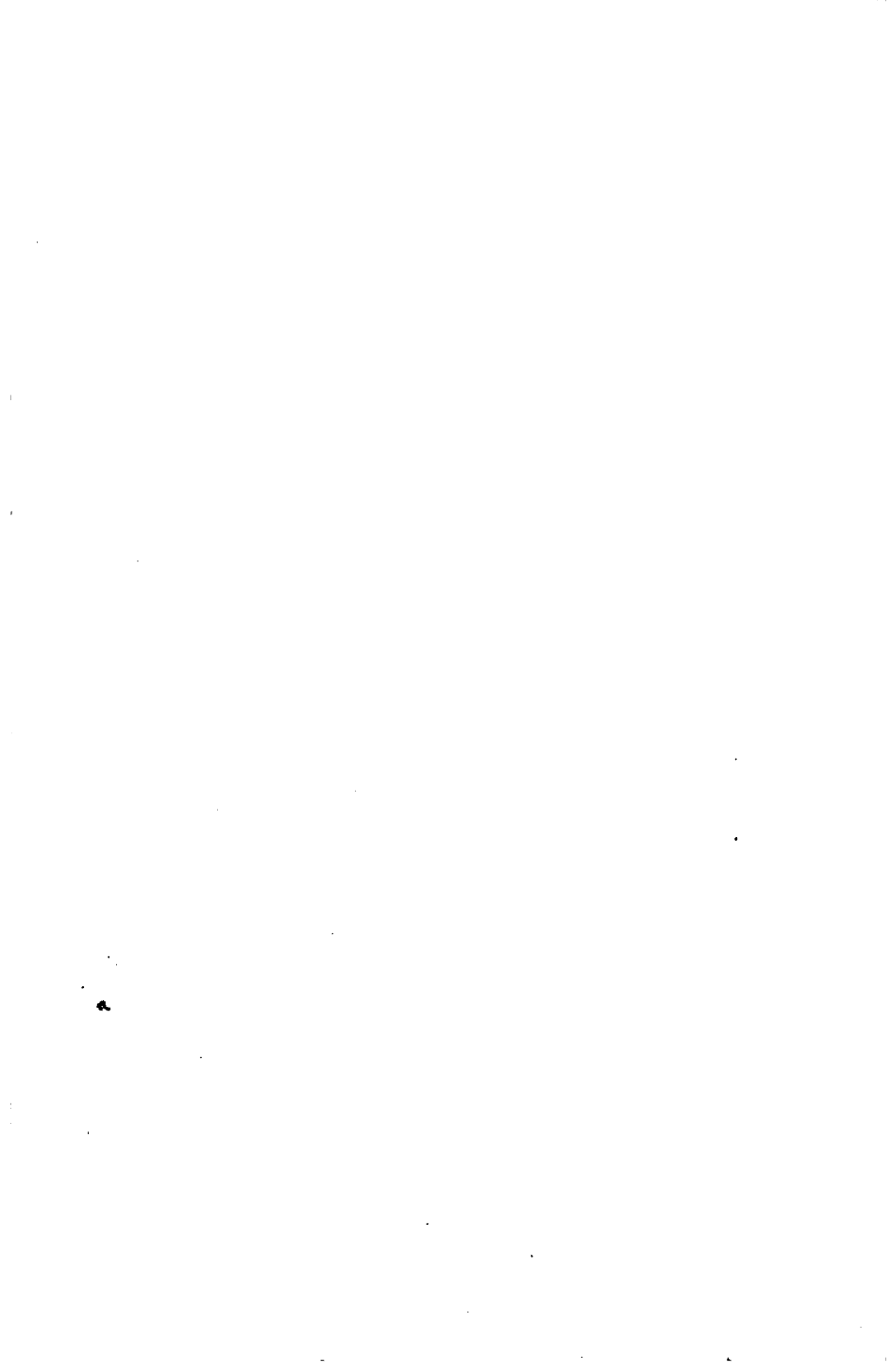
[J-D-WARNACK]

J. R. Duncanson
With much love from
Jean Hamilton Duncanson

Easter 1906







**LITTLE FLOWERS
OF A CHILDHOOD**







LITTLE FLOWERS
OF A CHILDHOOD

THE RECORD
OF A CHILD

*He turneth the Shadow of Death
into the Morning.*



ALEXANDER MORING LIMITED
32 GEORGE STREET, HANOVER
SQUARE, LONDON, W., 1906





TO
JEAN HAMILTON

IN REMEMBRANCE OF

J. D. W.

27TH OCTOBER 1894

TO 11TH MARCH 1899

The Editor desires to thank Messrs Methuen & Co. for their courtesy in allowing this second reproduction of the memorial design on the title-page, originally painted for her by Mrs Traquair as the title border of *Revelations of Divine Love*: JULIAN OF NORWICH, 1878 (ed. of 1901).

Her thanks are also due to Messrs Macmillan & Co. for their permission to quote three poems from Christina Rossetti's *Sing-Song*.

The kind wishes sent by Mr W. M. Rossetti, by Mr Laurence Binyon, and by Mrs Tynan Hinkson, from whose poem "Sheep and Lambs" (in *Ballads and Lyrics*) two verses have been taken, are gratefully remembered.

*" In the meadow—what in the meadow ?
Bluebells, buttercups, meadowsweet,
And fairy rings for the children's feet
In the meadow.*

*In the garden—what in the garden ?
Jacob's-ladder and Solomon's-seal,
And Love-lies-bleeding beside All-heal
In the garden."*

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI
(Sing-Song).

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PORTRAITS

Frontispiece. *From a photograph taken in May 1898*

THE LITTLE BOY IN HIS HOME . . . *To face p. 81*

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INTRODUCTION

HIS MOTHER SAID : “ *He was a gleam ; and how can one write the history of a gleam ?* ”

A child's life can never, I know, be taken apart and lifted up for survey by recording words : it dwells too close in the fostering, kindly shelter of the home where it has sprung ; and, again, it is still too strangely at one with the purity and peace of that Immortal Love where it lies, a dewdrop upon the Rose, translucent yet incommunicable.

It is difficult enough, indeed, to write the little story of a child for oneself ; and as to writing it for others—strangers—how can one hope to give at all the clear and delicate impression received through the days that passed ? One may tell of this and that, but the looks—those changing looks ; the voice,

with that dear lilt of its own; the pretty gestures; all the sweet medley of little "ways," familiar, yet always bringing a new enchantment—these cannot be shown again.

Yet as one and another who knew this child in his four years with us, and besides them several persons who heard of him afterwards, have wished to possess a memorial of their little friend, I have taken as they came in their order certain remembrances already written in the fuller record which I made for myself.

Doubtless most of these unforgotten child sayings and doings are altogether of every day in their infantine simplicity; but the book in which they have their place is meant for those scattered readers whose hearts are engaged not only with children—the living, the dead—but also with childhood itself, and who, perhaps, have sometimes leisure for things that are very simple and small.

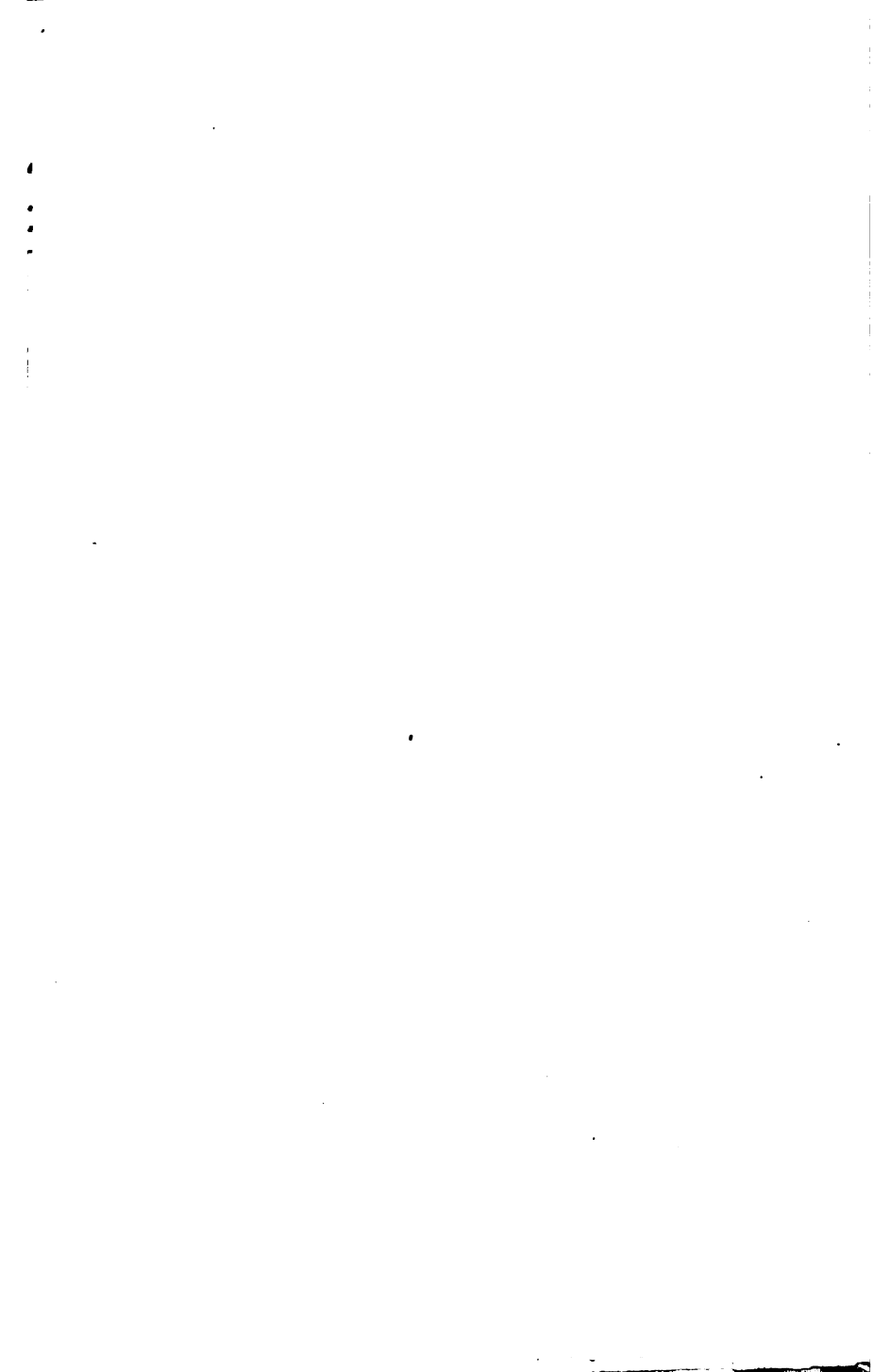
I have called my record of the child "Little Flowers," thinking of the story of

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that Saint of love who was, in the gentleness of his ardour and wisdom and gaiety, of saints the most childlike. At first, indeed, I meant to gather, and set by themselves like flowers, a few things in the life of the little boy and in his dying that seemed of significance. But I find that I have not skill to show these alone without losing the softness and quiet and oneness of nature — those kindly, unhurried goings on of nature, wherein the child was made ready for his happy task, and reached his fulfilment of spirit here, through all the unnoted nursery hours and the play and the love and the music of home and the wonder of the world outside. Therefore I have ended by going back to the whole little life as it was, not fashioning a picture of the flowers set together apart, but trying rather to show them as here and there they sprang in those pleasant days, half hid by the dear common grass of the meadow of Childhood.

April 1905.



PART I
IN THE MEADOW



CHAPTER I

THE LITTLE BOY

"Thou, over whom thy immortality
Broods like the day."

WORDSWORTH.

April 1899.—When I think of trying to describe the little boy, I remember how people used to say: "There is something special about him,"—meaning something unusual both in his character and in his looks. Perhaps this letter from a sister of mine, who stayed with him for a few days in his last summer, recalls in part this "something special," as well as the more general enchantment of youngness common to "three and a half years old":

"My remembrances of him are like those of a fresh spring flower, whose sweet *freshness* and fragrance are too delicate to be

distilled into a perfume ; all his lovely little ways, with the kind of 'ungainliness' of a little calf or lamb, which is so lovely and fascinating to watch, and his charming manner and voice, will always be in my memory, but are quite untranslatable by me into words."

One of his particular friends (the little boy's friends were mostly his father's) early took to calling him "Little Don Carlos," because to him there was some suggestion of a Velazquez portrait in the unusual colouring of the child and his little air of distinction. Speaking of the smoothness and pale, warm tint of his complexion, another artist struck out the expression "a dusky ivory." Yet often in play, and in the country, the little boy's cheeks had a rosy colour. He had soft, fairish hair, dull in general hue, but in little strands touched by the sunlight showing a glint of gold. His forehead was very broad, and had that look of tranquil purity sometimes seen as the sign of a spirit young and fair. And

I think that his clear grey eyes, with their spiritual depth and their outlook of candour and sweetness, were unforgettable.

As the little boy grew out of babyhood, often with some newly stirred and swiftly advancing thought — the result, perhaps, of his observation in this new world—a look of intellectual delight rose shining in his eyes, and changing expressions flitted over his eager face like flecks of sunlight. “He was so living, somehow, and with such gentleness too” (one wrote to me lately); and this vitality pervaded with freshness and delicate force all his varying moods. He was always a happy child and given to merriment. How well one remembers the subtle little smile at the humour of things perceived by his childish fancy, the ripple of half-incredulous laughter over “Daddy’s nonsense,” the unbounded hilarity over romping fun and play! Yet most characteristic of the child, I think, was an expression grave and earnest. And at times this gentle graveness was

deepened, as it were by some strange enhancement, passing in a quick inquiring glance or a moment's gaze to a look which imparted, perhaps, the impression of a spirit remote, but also, and with more intensity, the impression of a spirit that was wholly here—a little human spirit, yet “half angel,” looking forth from the region of “things unseen and eternal” into our faces, wondering whether we too were aware of the hidden Peace. To the end there came in his moods of quietness that look which is oftenest seen in the eyes of some young infant, whose silence seems to guard a secret read by the spirit elsewhere—as though, indeed, its “angel” were beholding the vision of Love Divine “revealed unto babes.”

Still, in general the face of the little boy suggested active thinking and purpose. (The photograph at the beginning of the book was like him, but showed him as he might look going into a room to face strangers, at a time when this had become a thing

that needed some effort. Standing on a little stair in a photographer's studio, he was trying to do what was wanted of him, and, perhaps, his steady will comes out here more evidently than his gentleness.)

The child used his hands very prettily and neatly in gestures and play. Light-footed and firm, he was fond of running quickly, though in walking he had a certain deliberateness of gait. His figure was slender and upright; and, with the usual childish suppleness, he would imitate anything, from the rocking of the sea to the stiff walk of a dancing bear which had passed him in the street. I remember the anxious, dumb, and alien look clouding the face of the child as, with bent shoulders and cautious tiptoe tread of turned-in feet, he rendered the impression made by the strange, uncouth creature which he had gazed on with deep interest and had so far understood. He loved "wild beasts."

Dainty as the little boy always looked, in white smock or linen overall, or what-

ever it might be, in the more advanced dress of his last ten months he seemed to acquire something new of a girt and braced appearance; and I think that he showed in it with special charm the quaint and elaborate grace of that ideal of chivalrous courtesy which captivated his mind.

When talking with people, the child had a very confiding and responsive manner, gentle and friendly. At other times, as when being driven in his mail-cart or walking in the street, there was, with all his grave sweetness, a curious little air of reserve.

I received the other day in connection with this Memorial a letter, from which I may take a few lines:

“It is rather occasions and his bearing in them that are fragrant in my recollection—as, for instance, the first time that I had a meal with all the family together, and the last time we had a ‘rumpus’ in the drawing-room. You will understand what I mean when I say that the conduct

of children, the way they meet situations, and how they look in their actions, appeals much more strongly to me than their words. Hence of my dear little 'chum' I have many visual but few vocal images. His eyes, and how he raised them up to people in hopeful presupposition that they were good, as 'they were meant to be'; the forward favourite bend of his head; and the curious movement of his feet from the knees—all are before me now, but they are not communicable impressions."

That is the difficulty: the impressions are hardly to be communicated; and one feels it most of all when one wishes to record how the child—the whole child, full of one soft, flowing life—really looked. I can only set down my own remembrance of that face of such sweetness and calm and candour as recalled to me those words in the ancient description of the countenance of our Lord: "Innocent, yet mature"; my own remembrance of that straight-set little figure that expressed a whole

personality—a child, not proud, yet gladly erect and free in spirit and bearing.

And as to his little sayings, of these there are after all but few preserved. One remembers rather in thinking of the child that kind of speech—as one felt it to be—beyond utterance: the little sigh, as out of the overwhelming greatness of life; the pause and the backward shrinking, as if with the burden of happy things that could not be told in words; a clasp of his hands together, a changing light, half perplexity, half smile, rising in the quiet depths of his eyes, and speaking to us from there.

Sometimes I used to say to the little boy's mother: "Has Baby been saying anything funny lately?" And I remember her answering once: "Oh, nearly everything he says seems *a little* funny, but it sounds nothing when another person tells it over again." One listened to the high-pitched mellow note of his voice beginning, as one would listen, arrested, to a blackbird's

sudden song; and now in these first summer days, while I write in the garden, that song of the blackbird is always reminding me of the sweet and blithe *insouciance*, scarcely plaintive, of its cadence—as in an “*I don’t know!*” (how should he?) in answer to some playful question of ours regarding his future years. He had a way of his own of repeating in his answers the form of the question. “Do you like this?” one would say to him. “I do like it.” And to the end he kept many of the baby pronunciations, such as “l” for “r,” though latterly he would often correct himself when he noticed them.

The little boy had a great love for music, and in his last winter especially used to sing about the house all sorts of airs that he had heard: the “Toreador” song from *Carmen* was a favourite. Little Violet (the elder of the two children) tells how he used to sing when he was having his bath “Britons never, never shall be slaves!” And most associated with him of all is the

evening hymn for children: "Now the day is over." I remember hearing, on one of the last days before he was taken ill, his clear, high voice singing the air of that hymn in some upper room.

CHAPTER II

BABY SPEECH

" . . . The pattering tread ;
The lisping tongue, the fearless eye
That keeps its memory of the sky ;
The wit that has not learned to think
Yet takes our wisdom to the brink,
At one touch, of the infinite ;
The simpleness of child delight."

MATTHEW BROWNE
(" Flowers and Snow ").

THE dear name of "Baby" clung to our little boy for long. During the last year we tried sometimes to use one diminutive or another of his baptismal name of "John"; but Violet kept always to the first way, and now we all go back to that early name of earth—enough for him here, although, thinking of his strenuous desire to act the true part that belonged to him, and be *more* than a baby, we often take refuge in the tender, vague distinction of "the little boy."

From the days of his infancy one pretty scene remains in my mind. We had gone to his home one evening, and as we were about to enter the drawing-room we met the nurse, with Baby in the robe of his recent christening. My father took him in his arms, and carried him into the lighted room. I remember how the blending of the grandfather's beautiful silvery locks with the whiteness of the little silk-sleeved arms upheld, and the contrast of colour in the softly shimmering folds of the robe against the blackness of evening dress, made one think of other contrasts that blended like these in one unbroken beauty, embracing the babe and the aged.

In the earliest months we noted the friendliness and responsive sweetness of the baby, who even when crying would stop to smile to anyone coming into the nursery; and I think that almost as soon as he managed to put words together we began to observe—partly, I suppose, because of his voice and manner—little things that he

said — little things of trifling reference, yet suggestive of disposition and ways of thought. He was long in learning to get out words beyond the usual baby names; I think that it was on the second of the yearly journeys to the Highlands that the rapidly passing sight of trees and fields moved him to an ecstatic “’ook! ’ook!” Henceforward “Look! oh, do look!” was a frequent call of his in a world of things that he found so “lovely.” A little sentence from his earliest attempts at speech remains in my mind as characteristic. The baby soon after his second birthday was at his grandfather’s house for an afternoon, and while I was pouring out tea and handing it about, this smallest guest, always so careful for others, trotted up to me, and said with his manner of gentle and grave concern: “Won’t *you* have tea?”

Even in those early days, amongst outsiders, the little boy especially delighted in *men*. The world of men consisted for him then of “Daddy” and “more Daddy,” and

to those trusted "other Daddies" passing him in the street he would often stretch out his arms in the most friendly way. He had no shyness of anyone: "Dood-bye, all bodies," he used to say, bowing and waving as he left the company in room or shop.

An illness of that winter gave us a glimpse of the steady little spirit known more fully later on. I remember how he submitted himself to the abhorred poultices without a struggle, thanking his nurse with a reassuring "good Na-na!" as it were to show that he understood the kindness which caused his hurt. So too when he had had his wrist bandaged after some slight sprain, and the doctor used to come and move it painfully, the baby, even if he cried for a moment, would end with his "Thank you," and sometimes through the day he would be heard crooning to himself a grateful little song of "A'koo, doctor!"

One nursery visit about this time is clear in my remembrance. Baby, who was sitting up in his crib in his cherry-red dressing-

gown, began talking to me about the shapes of things that he saw in the room or remembered — things round and things straight: “Eyes are lound; noses are stthaight; flowers are genelally lound; stalks are always stthaight.” I can see now that look of a kind of discovering joy which rose smiling and shining in his eyes, and spread over his grave and eager little face, as one by one those generalisations occurred to him and he communicated them to a sympathetic companion.

He had a way of musing on the things of his experience, and as speech became easier to him he would utter aloud his little reflections, to himself as often as to others. These took the form sometimes of axiomatic statements such as: “When we speak we don’t be quiet”; sometimes of moral maxims of a somewhat general nature, such as: “We ought always to twy to do fings”; sometimes of recorded observations on the ways and speech of men, or women, such as: “We call a wild cow

a bull." (The children when walking with their nurse frequently met droves of cows more or less wild.) I think he talked a great deal, though never continuously. Almost from the first he called himself "I," not "me," nor "Baby."

In this winter I took the little boy one day to the house of Mrs Traquair, the artist, and she made a water-colour portrait of him—an hour or two's work only, but with the charm of her colouring in the red coat open above his little white frock, and the opal or rainbow-like cloudiness of the background, tossed up into a faintly suggested circle, as it might be a previsionary halo over the fair head and steadfastly beholding eyes of the child, who somehow already was held amongst us as not only an Innocent but a saint.

CHAPTER III

THE HERITAGE OF EARTH

“ Come, then as ever, like the wind at morning,
Joyous, O Youth, in the aged world renew
Freshness to feel the eternities around it,
Rain, stars, and clouds, light and the sacred dew.”
LAURENCE BINYON.

ON one Sunday afternoon of that April when the little boy was two and a half years old, and Violet newly six, I took the children—Baby in his mail-cart—to the Arboretum and Botanic Gardens, calling on the way on a friend, who gave her little visitors biscuits for themselves and the birds. First we went through the Arboretum parks. I remember Baby's joy over the grass and daisies; how he seemed to stagger about and sink amongst them, keeping up a sort of inarticulate gurgle of infantine delight, as if he belonged to these young and bright and lowly things, and loved to feel the

kindly earth beneath him. Then there were the garden beds—of entrancing beauty and wonder, though to him, I think, of a less intimate joy. I remember Violet standing before one of them, gazing at a hyacinth, and saying over it, with soft, low voice, a little poem addressed to a flower. It had been learnt from her nurse, she told me, adding: "Nurse loves poetry." After the rest on the sunny lawn and the fairy feast of little "sweet biscuits"—one for each—and the gathering of a few daisies, if tipped with pink the more precious, to be carried tenderly and proudly in tiny hands, came the homeward walk through the Arboretum and the placing under various trees little heaps of carefully crumbled biscuit as feasts of surprise for the birds. But when we reached the lodge, and were reclaiming our mail-cart from the porter, that good guardian of the place observed with disapprobation the innocent posies of the children, and we were told, too late, that it was against the rules to gather

daisies. So the pink and white treasures had to be left behind. But in order that they might still fulfil some service, we laid them down as decorations on the nearer of those green tables of the birds where the feasts were set. And so we could leave them gladly.

Another memory of this early summer-time remains in my heart. Meeting the children and their nurse one May morning in some gardens of the town, I stayed to see them. While Violet ran about, the little boy, looking very sweet in his white sailor frock and broad-brimmed hat, stood by the bench, and playing with me some baby game of rapidly interchanging hands, said in his own dear way of noting each little pleasure as it came: "You and I have fun together." He could not yet pronounce the words plainly; but with him it was always, from times before speech, "You and I"—true companionship of a strong personality, conscious of itself and sympathetically conscious of the comrade

who shared in the interests of the world outside. Indeed, I think that this sympathy of the child's, so evident and eager, was one of his most distinctive charms even in those earliest days, as afterwards it seemed to lead him beyond the untroubled experience of his own infant life into deeps where he pressed, half conscious, yet understanding, an ardent and steadfast little "son of consolation."

The children's grandmother spent a few days with them in the country place where they stayed for part of the summer, and I remember her speaking of Baby's delight over everything, and of the way in which he threw himself into all sorts of inventions of play without any thought of notice from others of his little exploits. She told of his coming up to her as she sat in the garden one morning, and exclaiming: "De'icious day!" Some weeks later on, when his grandmother had driven out for an afternoon visit, and the coachman had given the children a little ride about the place,

Baby was heard chanting to himself in his joy: "I have a Granny, and a Granny's carriage!"

For the little boy's third birthday a strong wooden train of a good size had been made as his parents' present, and in the morning they took it up to the nursery door, and ran it in, standing outside to watch his delight. But the thing was too overwhelming to the child; he gazed at it for a moment, then turned back, and flung himself into his nurse's familiar, loving arms, sobbing: "Oh, Nursey, Nursey!" I wonder why the tears came. Not, I think, from either joy or fear, but rather from some feeling of this large toy being too much for ownership: as if the solid, splendid, lifeless thing weighed too obstructingly on the little infinite, intangible soul; as now and again the feeling takes us that some sight, possession, joy of the earth is somehow an alien thing, too much and too little—too large for the outer need, too small for the inner. But soon the birthday

gift worked its way into the little boy's life amongst his familiar and friendly things, and "my train" was to the end a favourite toy.

It must have been about this time, I think, that I first heard Baby use in talk the sacred name of that Friend of the children and the child-like, in whom, as in the home of its birth, his spirit, quick with adoring love and cheerful faith, was nurtured and grew. We were sitting—the children and I—by the fire one afternoon, when some light hammering in the next house sounded against the wall. "What is that noise, I wonder?" said I; and Baby answered: "Jesus knocking." In its innocent lightness and simplicity the child's explanation recalls two other child sayings of more significance.

I remember Violet (also then three years old) passing from mother to father with a little broken teapot from her wooden set: "Will you mend this, Mother?" "I can't." "Will you, Daddy?" "I

can't; I'm afraid no one can;" and the serenely confident answer of the child: "Jesus will—*some* day," as if, indeed, there was no hurry about the matter.

And more particularly I cherish the story told me of the children's six-year-old cousin, who, having done some damage to his clothes, had to undergo a little parental teasing. "Such a boy! We'll have to send him to a jumble sale." "But who would buy a boy who tore his trousers?" What could be more conclusive than the gentle, manly dignity of his answer of faith: "Jesus would"?

It was in this winter that Violet taught her little brother out of her beloved *Sing-Song* book "Baby's poem." I remember how when Violet, telling us of his accomplishment, spoke of the poem as by Miss Rossetti, Baby slid in his careful *Christina*, and how then, slowly, and hesitating sometimes through the effort to remember (for he had no special aptitude for "learning things off"), he repeated the

rhyme, with bewitching gravity and smiles of appreciation and little asides of his own :

“What does the bee do?
Bring home honey. (*Kind bee!*)
And what does father do?
Bring home money.
And what does mother do?
Lay out the money.
And what does baby do?
Eat up the honey.”

—or as he would sometimes say: “Eat up all the honey”—adding, with an engaging smile of half-shocked amusement: “*Gleedy* baby!”

Nothing could belong more closely to the child in his ways of thought as we came to know them than that remembered half sigh of “Kind bee!”—with the tender voice, the shining eyes. How many things in his little life, from the bee of his first poem to the “bulls” of his last hours’ musings, he called “kind”! “Kind nurse,” who puts on the burning poultice; “kind doctor,”

who gives the bitter medicine and the dreadful hurt. Sweet love - discerner, and would you tell us now that Death is kind too—"the kindest of all"?

CHAPTER IV

OUTLOOK AND INSIGHT

"When a mounting skylark sings,
In the sunlit summer morn,
I know that heaven is up on high
And on earth are fields of corn.

But when a nightingale sings
In the moonlit summer even,
I know not if earth is merely earth,
Only that heaven is heaven."

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI
(*Sing-Song*).

DURING the winter of 1897-8 I was seldom with the children, but one little story of that time is preserved. "Daddy" had exclaimed: "What should we do if we had no children?" "Ky," said Baby. "No," said Violet, "they wouldn't cry, Baby, because if they hadn't any children they wouldn't know what it was like to have them." Possibly the acute reasoner of six years

did not in this case come so near the mark as the hasty sympathiser of three.

In that winter Baby already used to tell us about "Gheeston and Elsbrown," his invented names for two country places of his fancy. He always was clear, when you asked him, as to which of them he was going in the sleep-train at night: I think that somehow Gheeston was his favourite. At what time he first began to speak of those enchanting places I do not know—but to the end of his life they were dear to him. I remember him telling me in his last winter of one of them—Gheeston, I think it was: "And I saw a little girl there; she lived in a house with a garden; her name was Alice." "Did you speak to her?" I asked. "Oh no!" said Baby—reserved little man as he was; "I didn't *know* her."

Baby in this winter was still wearing out of doors his little coat of deep red, with a large round hat of black velvet set back from his forehead and showing the circlet

of his hair. I remember asking him what colour his coat was. "Red" was not nearly exact enough for the little boy, who had a way of describing things as "creamish," "bluish," etc. He hesitated, and tried "Leddish purple"; then, as if feeling that this was not quite satisfactory, substituted in a desperate sort of way "*Leddish somefing.*"

From their earliest days the children showed a great love and concern for beauty. "I liked every room in the place!" declared the little boy, with his manner of serious enthusiasm, as I carried him from his first visit to the house of a neighbour. He had only been in the drawing-room for a few moments, but it turned out that he had "seen into" the dining-room as he was carried past it. "The gas was not up, but the fire was lit," he explained, and the glimpse of harmonious colouring and old pictures had instantly pleased the child.

I remember Violet, when very small, announcing her gracious approval of home

surroundings with the explanation : “ I like pretty shapes ” ; but it was colour, I think, that oftenest drew from Baby his gravely rapturous “ Lovely ! ” “ Lovely wall ! ” he exclaimed on an early visit to our house—perhaps the very dull yellow of that upstairs passage had caught some glory of sunshine—“ it must have been a painter-man that painted this ! ” Loud inharmonious colouring was abhorrent to the children, and one day I noticed the little boy’s aversion to the idea of anything, even in the way of beautiful colour, that would seem unnatural or out of place. Playing with a Christmas-tree bird of glass, he came up to me speaking of its “ lovely colour ”—amber and silver and crimson, with clear, shimmering fibres of crest and outspread tail. “ But,” said the child, “ it would be dreadful if a *real* duck had these colours ! ” “ A real duck,” he mused, with such and such colours (purple was one), “ would be beautiful.”

In the springtime of this year came that era of progress for the little boy of three

and a half, when his pretty white smocks and sailor tunics were to be more or less given up, and his clothing to become distinctively that of "a man." Less than a yard of the grey velvet—how carefully chosen!—was enough to send to the tailor who fashioned those tiny trousers barely reaching to the knees; yet clad in them and the frilled blouse of soft grey silk, and the familiar white socks, and black shoes with buckles and straps, our little boy, a baby no longer, looked, and felt, I think (if one may guess at the thoughts of a little heart), clothed as he ought to be. Erect and grave he stood for the inspection of those interested in the new garments; and when after the desired "show off," so simply done, in obedience and enjoyment too, he would turn in his natural way to his games, one fancied that the free activity of his limbs and the merry glint in his eyes answered to some happy sense of boyish spirit and some new little impulse inventive of boyish fun. He had looked

before, indeed, a regular boy-child, but although one still saw in his face that baby look of his "angel infancy" he was now more distinctively one of the men of this earth who so greatly interested him. And I think that he was made very glad by the outward tokens and the general recognition of that manhood which he had grown to feel within him, and which became to him an ideal as well as a fact.

For he took the matter seriously and simply, and evidently felt that the time had come in his life when he should have done with the things that were for babies only, and that now he was meant to be "a man"—though not a grown-up one.

Certainly those who saw the child from day to day could see that he followed blithely, with loyal good will and conscience, not only his ideal of general right conduct, but also, and more especially from about this time, the fulfilment of that essentially manly part which belonged to him. Between the smaller things and the greater that came

in his life and death there was no incongruity: one felt, indeed, as if the smallest of his doings belonged to the region of high things by virtue of a certain ardour and exquisite finish of performance. And although this grace of demeanour seemed for the most part an easy, unconscious outcome of that gentle nature which had from the first been governed and exercised in a pretty lore of love's perfection, yet it proved itself also, as life with its difficulties, temptations, and pains opened up, the dutiful achievement of the "Happy Warrior" in all those things of good report on which he had set his heart. That pleasant wisdom of his babyhood's learning: "We should always try to do things," was faithfully observed in the carrying out of his own small duties, even when no one was present to remind him of them, and when the packing of a box of bricks might be an irksome task to a little boy weary at the end of his happy day. So also his smiling criticism of the "gleedy baby" of his earliest rhyme was

recalled one day by the refusal of a biscuit offered by his mother at a time when it seemed to the child's little delicate mind that "it would be greedy" to take it; although he told the reason only when asked "Why not?"—

"*I'm* not a baby now; *I* don't need to sit on people's knees," our little boy gently but firmly reminded me, dropping off my lap one evening when an occasion of some formality made it specially desirable to preserve the part that really belonged to one. Nevertheless, he was generally quite pleased, for affection's sake, to be taken on people's knees if they wanted him; and, indeed, one always felt inclined to lift him in one's arms, he looked so dear a baby still, especially in his linen overall.

The little boy was very punctilious in rendering the various small courtesies of life. His "Thank you" was sweet and gracious, and after his clear "Good-bye" he always liked to make "my bow." "It's only mans that bow," he reminded a visitor,

on behalf of his little sister, who had given up the ceremony of her babyhood. Of later learning was "I beg your pardon," recalled and brought out with a quaint scrupulosity of faithfulness. There was, however, nothing overstrained in the little boy's conception of good manners. One afternoon, when he had finished his milk at the nursery tea, he asked : "Will you es'use me, Nurse?" Nurse, for some reason, said "No." "Then will you es'use me, Violet?" "I can't, Baby, if Nurse doesn't," said Violet discreetly. "Oh, then," said Baby, "I must just es'use myself," and slipped down from his chair.

July and August of that year were spent amongst the familiar delights of the daisied grass and trees and flowering shrubs of High Mains, with its swing and hammock and tent and archery, fowls to be fed, and the gorgeous peacock, with its broken-legged mate "the poor peahen." Many were the photographs taken in that garden of the children. One of the prettiest, I think, of all that set of pictured moments is "the

lily of a day," as someone afterwards called it. The little boy in his linen overall stands white against the darkness of the great fir-trees, his feet amongst the daisies, and with face upraised and parted lips responds to the downward-smiling gaze of his father. His father, bending forward, clasps tight the little outstretched hands. It looks to me as if some young angel, here for the day, were caught, and held listening to a song of earth, and for love's sake—with yet a little play of sweet derision—repeated it note for note.

Violet, in our fairyland plays together in the other garden, where she has been spending these last too lonely months, has from time to time recalled and spoken of some of the country plays with her little brother. "Baby and I used to have such fun finding toadstools, and taking the skins off, and p'e-tending they were mushrooms." (I said something about their being so poisonous, but that Baby was never in the way of putting things in his mouth. "Oh no!

But he *once* put a piece of paper in his mouth when we were at Moulin ; he was just about a year old, and he was teething.") "Baby and I used to look for those little round yellowish things that fall off the trees, and when you scrape them they look just like sponge-cakes. It was lovely!" "Baby and I used to blow soap-bubbles. We sent them off, and blew them right up to the roof of the house. He was very good at it." "And did you play with Baby at pretending stories?" I asked Violet. "Yes ; we always played at the same thing. I was a lady who lived alone, and he was a little girl who was coming to stay with me. And I used to go to meet him. Then I used to have the 'hurlic' to meet him, and push him in it across the line just in front of the train." Delightful risk ! How the little boy loved "the bright face of danger" !

In those summer days Baby had not begun lessons : I think that as to the alphabet he was quite sure only of "A,"

and, perhaps, "B"; yet he was increasing in other wisdom.

The world was a flowering life all about him, and he, a growing child, felt the one and manifold life within himself. A letter, dated August, to his mother from his grand-aunt refers to one of his questions:

"You must, indeed, have been puzzled with his query; 'What is it inside me makes me move?' which immensely interested *my* inside. But he is really too young to be taken up with these metaphysical difficulties."

And death, too, the child found here. The children had been looking through their pretty "Sing-Song" book, and over the picture of an empty cradle and a mourning sister, Violet, who at an earlier age than Baby's had wept over her thoughts of mortality: "I wish that my body could go to heaven *wiv* my spirit!" but who now was quite reconciled to that which *must* be, imparted to her little confidant the knowledge that he too would some time die.

The three years old child, so full of conscious life and the love and gladness of all that he knew, was troubled by the imagination of death. In the night he waked, and cried over its sorrow, and in the morning he told his mother. His mother told him that it was only his body that would die; his spirit could never die. So the child was comforted, and said: "Oh, then, that's only *p'etending* dying!" And afterwards he told his nurse: "My *spilit* can never die."

But it was of love that the child had the fullest knowledge — love greater than the heart it filled. One day in this summer he was playing about the room, where his mother was writing a letter to a lady, recently widowed, who had been with them on a visit. "I hope I'm not making too much row?" said the little son; then, hearing that the letter was to this relative, he said: "Tell her that I leally love her so much." His mother, hoping, perhaps, that he would give his reason in some words of

praise that might be sent as comfort from the child beloved, asked him : " Why do you love her so much ? " But the little boy, speeding farther to the inmost Source of That which " makes us move," answered : " I fink it must be Jesus' Good Spirit inside me that makes me love her so much."

Perhaps it was because of little sayings such as these that one, his friend—himself a studious thinker—said of this little child : " He thought great thoughts simply."

CHAPTER V

LITTLE DOINGS

"Those white designs which children drive."

HENRY VAUGHAN

("Childe-hood").

IN this country place the children's mother took them one Sunday to morning prayer in a small church near their gate. The beauty of the place and the music and the solemnity so filled the little boy with responsive feeling that before they left he sighed out in his ardent way: "I like this church! I like *all* of it!" This was about the first time, I think, that he had been at church, but afterwards he went once or twice with his parents at home. At the seaside place where September was spent Baby was taken one day to a Children's Service, from which he brought back this report: "And do you know, Mother, the

minister didn't know what to say, so he asked a little girl, and *she* told him."

A note of this month says: "Baby is absorbed in all kinds of plays of his own—'Kime-trains' is one. The name is made up to denote some special variety of train. 'You should say: "I wonder if any Kime-trains is coming?"' I, who have been so little after all with the children, only knew of Baby's "Coo-trains," where the engine—that is, Baby—used to let off steam with a high musical "Coo!" Some of the "Gheeston" verses which I obtained for my own chronicle of the children I copy here, because they recall so vividly this favourite play of the little boy. The simple rhyme was written after his feet were stilled in death and silence had come on the cheerful railway. I quote here only Part I.

"All people ready, please,
Luggage in the van,
Gheeston and Elsbrown!
Shouts the railway man.

'Coo!' says the engine,
Puffing at the top,
And round about the carpet
Flies little Donn-ylop.¹

'You should say "Good-bye," Mother,—
Daddy, say "Good-bye!"'
The engine—or the passenger?—
Waves his hand on high.
Arms that whirl like piston-rods,
Hair a flying mop,
Sweet grey eyes that dance for joy,
Little Donn-ylop.

The dear Gheeston railway
Runs along the shore,
Green woods and telegraph posts,
Tunnels by the score;
Men to call the names out
At places where you stop—
Everything delightful
To little Donn-ylop.

And Gheeston! such a lovely place!
Cottages and towers,
Churches crammed with organs,
Gardens thick with flowers;
Black bulls and dickybirds,
A toy-and-chocolate shop,
Pictures and a sandy beach
For little Donn-ylop."

¹ His baby attempt at his Christian name, John Dunlop.

On Baby's fourth birthday I gave him what his mother said would please him most, a new box of coloured chalks. Though he had been fond of using pencils and chalks it had up to about this time been merely for baby scribbling, with here and there an "A" or a "B." But now his efforts to make pictures of things became of great interest to him. "Perhaps Baby will be an artist," I said one day to Violet, as I saw him busy with his drawing. "He *is* an artist," said Violet.

One of his earliest attempts, and his masterpiece, I think, was "A ship going to Italy," sent to his grandparents, who had gone there for the winter. It was to me in its simplicity of delineation an interesting example of a child's undirected ways in art. As a painter said of the children's drawings: "Always in them something is *being done*." And here was upheaving and plunging of water in the variously crossing strokes of the waves; while one felt the steady onward progress of the

distant steamer in the set of its two slanting lines—the deck—from which, at their apex of meeting, rose the funnel (two parallel lines) with its trail of flying smoke.

I have still as a treasured possession a few scraps of paper with drawings by the little boy and notes of our conversation about them. One afternoon he made for me another steamer on its voyage, in style like the one that I wished him to reproduce, but even simpler. I said: "I don't think this is so good as the 'Ship going to Italy'"; but the little artist replied in a conclusive way: "*This* is a *Dutch* one." To make sure of the intention, I asked if one line near the foreground of tossing sea showed a part of the steamer beneath. "Oh no!" he said; "that's the sea—the way it moves." Then with grave eagerness he went on: "The sea *moves*; I'll show you how it moves," and began bobbing and bending up and down.

Amongst the other little pictures done in coloured chalks there is a drawing of a fish swimming—a weird-looking thing with its dim but impressive eyes, penetrating onwards, darkly meditative. “This is a fish,” said Baby. I said doubtfully: “It’s rather funny!” Baby, however, had a vindication of his work unanswerable in its comprehensive vagueness: “But it’s a different *kind* of fish.” “You don’t bite it when you eat it,” he continued; and my suggestion that that might be on account of its softness was accepted. I asked about the small fins at each side. “These,” he said, “are the fins that help it to fish” (*i.e.* to swim). And then he added, forestalling, perhaps, expected criticism of the tail, which was set upright from one side: “*This* kind of fish has a tail *that* way.” A useful kind of answer, I think.

Another of my papers shows a boat, evidently from its slant on the waves, which are left to fancy. Near the sail a

little bird—sole occupant of the boat—is ensconced, with its head, nestling prettily, turned seawards. “Is the bird looking out?” “No,” said Baby; “it’s just lying down.” A half-closed umbrella, done in green chalk, was very like the real thing, and I asked: “Did you see an umbrella, Baby, or did you just remember one?” “No; I never saw a green one; I was finking of one.” As to a fly, life-size, lying on its back, and very well rendered by the outline and the minute chalk markings of eyes and body, there was, perhaps, some sense of failure: “It hasn’t got legs.”

It seems to me that the things in these earliest attempts at art have, indeed, a look as if they were doing something, wherever action is appropriate. The distant steamer has its own steady directness of movement, quite different from the easy rock of the little boat, with its one roving passenger at rest by the sail; the fish is slowly swimming down through the waters which fancy sees; and a little cock, very suggestive of

strut and crow, seems to raise its body as it turns its head jauntily round towards its tail. There is one drawing—the simplest of all—a bird that is flying: the head, forward stretching from the neck, is a mere dot like a pin's head; one stroke, increasingly slender, serves for the body; one curved line set across it for the tail. But the *bird* is there in the sweep of the wide-spread wings, set as though sailing onward and downward across the wide sky.

Amongst the notes on these drawings I find another memorandum, made at the same time. The little boy had been showing me one of Lear's "Nonsense Books," and I had asked, wondering what his answer would be: "What is nonsense?" For a moment he thought, then answered: "Saying what you're not meant to." At first I fancied that this was intended for "saying what you don't mean," and I suggested these words to him. He gave a very doubtful, hesitating "Yes"; but I saw plainly that his own idea had been accurately expressed by himself—

the idea of something against reason ; some caprice, as it were, or play of fancy, only for the moment's laughter.

Often, indeed, it used to strike me that the children's thoughts were founded on some habitual consciousness of ordaining design, of there being a standard, or varying standards rather, for human beings in all matters and at all stages of their lives, and standards also for other beings. I remember a curious expression struck out by Violet when she was about two and a half. Her father had taken her out for a walk, and was playfully teasing her about a mare and a foal in a field by the road, picturing the mare putting its foal to bed at night. Violet, of course, refused to accept this account. "No, it won't," she protested ; "it *can't* ; it hasn't hands, Daddy !" And at last, driven to desperate effort in defence of truth : "It wasn't *meant* to be having hands !" (a little saying which has seemed capable of wide and consolatory application.) The boy's talk showed even

more frequently a dominant sense that certain things were "meant" to be. As an instance of his use of the word, his mother told me how one day, when in reply to some question of his she had said: "We'll ask Daddy; perhaps he will know," Baby, with characteristic faith, had answered: "Oh yes; Daddy knows everything that a man's meant to."

The only thing in the way of a tale that I ever heard from Baby was told to me on that November evening after the drawings were made, and I noted it down at the time. I do not know whether he was in the way of inventing stories beyond his fancies about Gheeston and Elsbrown, but on that evening, as I stood by his crib saying "Good-night," he began, all of his own accord, looking up at me with the enjoying, confidential smile of his shining eyes, and a pretty graciousness, as of one who gave to a child some good thing unasked for: "I'll tell you a very little story."

"Yes; do."

“There was a little boy, and his daddy was out—at church—and he *fought* he saw a tiger. (But it was a puppy-dog—a great big one.) So he looked in the newspaper, and he found that it was only a puppy-dog. And he was very glad. (And the puppy-dog ran away from his lady, and was *alone*. But it wasn’t a *tiger*, and it didn’t eat him.)”

I think that this little boy of the “very little story” was all expressive of the little boy who imagined him and of his experience and vision of life. To me the tiny tale is precious, not as strained to allegory of a world where evil seems sometimes to threaten its children, left alone for a while, but because I believe that the actual thoughts of reason and feelings of trust to which the boy had come about real dogs at large, real “bulls” straggling uncertain along the street, truly underlie the childish fancies and interpret them. For the fortitude, the gladness, to which he attained in face of those little perils of his daily walks are indeed amongst the treasures bequeathed

to our hearts. One could see from the face of the child that he was picturing an experience intimate and happy, a thing that he liked to think of and communicate to a friend. I could well understand the way of it: a sudden thrill—half fear, half delight—a tiger! But is it really a tiger? The little boy of the story consults his best source of knowledge, and finds that it is only a puppy-dog. A great big one it is, and running about alone, away from the control of its mistress; quite likely to jump on a little boy, but only in good intention, not wanting to eat him.—Danger in appearance, to be welcomed as being in truth but kindly strength,—but never a danger to be feared: it is the story of his own little sensitive spirit, shrinking from anything like assault, yet trustful, discerning, courageous, and in all his faiths and his findings made “very glad.”

CHAPTER VI

FROM DAY TO DAY

"The world is so full of a number of things,
I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings."

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON
(*A Child's Garden of Verses*).

A LETTER about the date of 27th October (1898) tells of the little festivities of the four years old boy, and bears thanks to the grandparents in Italy for their birthday present, which is to be expended, not on paying for his own dinner, as he suggests, but partly, at least, on some toy. However, when the time came for choosing something from the children's stalls at the Christmas bazaar, Baby, although he was tremendously interested in the toys, seemed rather to shrink from the idea of possessing any of them. "I like to look at them, but I shouldn't like to have them," he said.

At the end of this month the children went to a "Hallowe'en" party. "They were springing about with joy," as a letter tells, before they started. "I'm all in white, except my face," said the little boy, so struck by his festive white shoes and silk socks that he forgot about the familiar grey velvet trousers that went with his white silk blouse. Violet was "a little afraid," she said, "that he might be shy" (for this was the only large party that he was ever at); but she took him under her protection, and when they came home—"both in high glee"—the little boy announced that he had "spoken to people he really didn't know." "I kissed everybody, except myself and people who belonged to me," said our accurate Baby.

Another letter tells of the children spending an afternoon with some friends of mine, where, after tea, their amusement was stencilling. After an hour or so of this fascinating but strenuous occupation Baby was asked: "Aren't you tired now?" And

it seems to me as if I can still hear his grave, emphatic voice as he answered: "*I am* tired; but I'll do it." Afterwards in his home, musing on his experiences, he suddenly sighed out to himself: "*I liked everything!*" He was kept downstairs longer than usual that evening, and the letter tells how, when on his going up to his mother's room to say "Good-night," she remarked: "You are very late to-night, Baby," he answered, in his quaintly exact mode of speech: "But it's not *I* that am late, Mother; it's *the night* that is late."

Letters of that last winter to the grandparents give frequent accounts of the children and their little sayings, and from these I preserve in this place a few remembrances of the days as they passed.

From his mother.—"Baby is always singing to himself. On Christmas Eve I told him that Santa Claus was not bringing him toys this year, only books. 'Well,' he said, 'I only hope they're not hymn-books!'" (And I am sure that the books

for our unlettered Baby would all be picture-books.)

Christmas Day was dull and rainy. The little boy, though he had been at church in the morning, could not have his afternoon walk, and sat looking over picture-books with me. There was nothing of gaiety out of the common—rather there was less in this Sunday than in most others—but for the little boy's heart and imagination *it was Christmas*. Every now and then, as my letter tells, he said to me: "We're having a *very* happy Christmas, aren't we? We're having a *very* merry Christmas, aren't we?"

"The other day, seeing the table set for guests, Violet asked: 'Do people have bread and wine on the table always to remind them of the Last Supper?'"

Jan. 1899.—"I said to Baby that I would tell Grandfather and Granny about his little new coat and cap of deep blue, and that I was going to write in two or three days; on which he remarked: 'Two would be better than three,' then added,

with a funny little emphasis: 'One would be better than two!'

Feb.—"Baby gives a very dramatic rendering of a new nonsense rhyme:

'There was a young lady of Wilts,
Who walked up to Scotland on stilts;
When they said "It is shocking
To show so much stocking,"
She answered, "Then what about *kilts*?"'

"When he was in bed I was telling him that the tigers in the London garden had beef for dinner. 'Oh, like us?' he said. 'And do they have custard pudding?' (a favourite with himself). I said I didn't think that they would much care for that. He suggested arrowroot, but evidently thought that might be rather a flimsy diet. Wanting to give an idea of the enormous size of a tiger, he stretched his little arms to their full extent, and was much surprised to hear that a tiger's length exceeded anything that he could show in that way. He thought that, perhaps, he could show it with his bricks."—I like to preserve amongst the

other things this memory of a little ignorant fancy of the child, who to the end retained so much of the charm of babyhood: his conception of the size of a tiger explains how the mistake of the hero in his story seemed possible.

Feb. (Sunday). My letter refers to the little boy's pleasure in politeness.—“‘Always ladies first!’ he remarked as I helped Violet to something at lunch; and a few minutes after he exclaimed: ‘Wouldn’t it be *dreadful* if a man went in front of a lady?’ In the afternoon Miss — came to see the children. I had heard that the little boy had made up his mind to marry his grand-aunt some time, ‘because she hadn’t been married before.’ After leaving the room for a moment—I believe he was consulting his mother—he came in again, looking a very small mite in his linen overall, and very grave. He walked straight across the room, stood a yard or so off from her, and said, with an air of solemn business: ‘Auntie, *when* will you marry me?’ Miss

— hesitated, and I asked him when he would like it to be, to which he answered simply: ‘Now.’” (I do not think that I ever heard the little boy speak with greater gravity of steadfast purpose than in this offering of himself to fulfil that helping part which his thoughtful chivalry missed from the life of one whom he loved. Yet before that, his baby fancy had chosen for his bride of the coming time a little three-year-old friend of Violet’s.)

“When I was with the children in their mother’s room in the evening” (she was then ill) “there was some laughing talk about the giving of a tonic, which the doctor had said might be taken in a smaller dose than that marked on the label. Violet’s comment was: ‘I wish *I* might say how much medicine I was to have; it wouldn’t be much!’ and the patient playfully complained that everyone was against her—‘the doctor ordering such horrid medicine, I scolding her,’ etc. The little boy rushed in with his ardent assurances that *he* wasn’t

against her—nor anyone—and then in a moment he added: ‘But the doctor is the kindest of all.’ ‘Why?’ ‘Because he makes you better.’ ‘But I wish you were well,’ he continued, ‘for then the doctor would not need to come.’

“The other day the children’s father, having been pertinaciously questioned as to whether any creature existed who could cook and eat children, admitted that there were some people—away over the sea—who sometimes killed and ate each other. Baby, however, after a moment’s reflection, objected to this form of words: ‘But, Daddy, they couldn’t eat *each other*.’ I was shown a curious little face drawn by Baby, in primitive style, and painted by Violet, who dubbed the picture ‘A Japanese Boy.’ Baby honestly confessed: ‘I did not mean it to be a Japanese person, Violet; I meant it to be a proper person.’ Violet, much amused: ‘But the Japanese are proper people, Baby!’ ‘They’re very *funny* people, then,’ said Baby.”

March 5 (the little boy's last Sunday).—
“At breakfast, when a labourer was walking past the house, Baby had remarked: ‘What a funny noise people's boots make on Sunday!’ His mother told me about her reading ‘Peep of Day’ and ‘Line upon Line’ to him this morning. She wishes that she could remember all his comments. On hearing of the Wilderness of Temptation his fancy was roused by the idea of being there alone with the wild beasts. He seemed to think that that would be a splendid experience. When his mother read to him about the Holy Child, and how good and obedient He was, and how everyone loved Him, Baby exclaimed in admiration: ‘Oh, I think *He* must have loved *Himself*!’ Hearing lately the story of Eden, he said: ‘It's a pity that someone did not come and kill the devil, and then he would be dead.’ J—— murmured to himself that he was afraid *he* would never be dead. But the little boy replied: ‘Well, when *we* are all dead, the devil will be dead too.’”

From his mother's record.—"The Sunday before he died he was with me as usual. I read some chapters out of 'Peep of Day' to him—the Massacre of the Innocents. I remember so well the expression of his face and the pale, indignant look that came over his face when he heard of what Herod did. 'Oh, Mother, I wish I could have been a soldier, and then I would have killed him!' He was always saying he would like to be a soldier—'but just to kill the wicked people.'"

"In the afternoon his father took the little boy to call on his grand-aunt, and he chatted away to his much beloved 'Auntie,' telling her of a wonderful dream he had had of 'ninety-six black bulls.'

"Later on, as we were talking in the drawing-room, I said to Baby something about the time when he would be 'a big man.' '*Big?*' he exclaimed. 'How dreadful that would be!' In a moment, however, he took heart, and said: 'But when I *am* big, I'll go out walks *alone*. And I'll

always go on the *tops* of cars, never to the bottom.' 'And in how many years will that be?' asked his father. 'I don't know,' said Baby; 'in ninety-six?' 'Well,' said his father, 'in ninety-six years you would be a hundred, so I think if you were ever to do it you would have to begin then.'"

The boyish spirit of adventure, and the hope for high things, which overcame the child's first dread of a state beyond experience, found in few days a better fulfilment. Our "little boy" did not come to the dreaded bigness, but, like the hero of that sweetest of England's sea-songs, "the bravest of the crew":

"On earth he strove to do his duty,
And now he's gone aloft."

CHAPTER VII

GROWING LIFE

"Fair is the Face of Righteousness and Wisdom; fairer than is the Evening Star or the Dawning."

PLOTINUS.

"I beheld none higher stature in this life than Childhood, in all its feebleness and failing of might and of wit."—JULIAN OF NORWICH (*Revelations of Divine Love*).

KNOWING little of other children, I cannot tell whether those things of the mind and spirit that impressed me in the little boy are common to childhood, but certainly I used to feel latterly that there was in him some pervading quality which might, perhaps, be called "genius," though how this sensitive, apprehending, executive vitality might afterwards embody itself one could hardly guess. In the child the beauty that held us, as though in a kind of smiling

reverence, was something more than the evidence and more than the outcome of merely mental powers—a simple ardent energy and sanctitude of soul, a grace of living, some force of personality indescribable.

He was not, I think, in the least precocious, nor even quick in his advancement along the ordinary lines of childish progress; indeed, at an age when many children are able to read, Baby was only learning his alphabet. As to his talk, bright and charmingly fresh as it was in its direct simplicity, it never had anything after the manner of those little fireworks sometimes let off by childish wit. His thoughts and fancies did not come in flashes, but seemed, as it were, to dawn and grow upon his own mind gradually, though with happy surprises of perception, when the light in his eyes would “twinkle” like the “little star” of the children’s rhyme. He was equably contented and always full of interest in things, and though not in any way an excitable child, he was often in a mood of high-spirited fun. He used to

amuse himself with inventing words and variations of words, and sometimes even when he was not talking, a dimpling, humorous smile would suggest that he made merry over things in his mind. Indeed, one always felt about the child, as it were set amongst the foundations of character, not only his absolute candour and truth, but a certain gay wisdom and innocent shrewdness.

Free from self-consciousness, in the ordinary sense, as he evidently was, the little boy showed a consciousness of his own being and his place in the world of a clearness and force unusual, perhaps, at his age. He had the habit of ready obedience to anyone in charge of him ; but he exercised his own mind on subjects of opinion, and was quite accustomed to speak it out, smiling or earnest, with an assured frankness that no one had ever tried to suppress.

In preserving my memories of a little child I am far from wishing to elaborate a picture of perfections only : we were always

glad enough, I think, to note anything in our very human and boyish little saint of which, telling each other with smiles, we could say: "After all, he is not too good for this world!"—only it was very seldom we had the chance. Now and again one heard of a small dispute between the child whose three years had brought a growing independence of purpose, and the six-year-old leader of the play—"made up" in a moment or two with tears on the one side and boyish unconcern on the other; but in the last year or so the two children, gentle and affectionate as they had always been, became, as those in charge of them observed, still more habitually inclined to yield to each other. It was pleasant to see such good comrades—the elder child in her strong, unselfish love full of help and care for the little brother in whom was her happy pride; the boy all loving confidence in this sister-friend, this little "lady," to whom his eager courtesy paid homage.—

"Lord, bless our food, and make us good"

was the children's grace. And one would not forget the daily benefits of the nursery table, nor yet those tastes of childhood, delicately keen, and enhanced by imagination—those half-fanciful pleasures that can transfigure a simple meal into a festivity as high and wonderful as though the little ones sat down to some board in Paradise.¹ The sponge-cakes and chocolates, so delightful in “pretending” of play, to be offered with gravely smiling hospitality to the grown-up people, were also, when provided in real life, very interesting to see, and delightful to partake of, in that moderate way of the children, who never would help themselves, even to the preliminary bread, without a “Please, may I have some?” We used to find, however, in their afternoon visits to “Granny's house” that the plainest biscuits were preferred to sweet things. I remember Violet's merry answer to the suggestion that the one she had chosen was too dry:

¹ I think that this comparison is in some book of George Macdonald's. I do not remember its name.

"It can't be dry, for it's marked '*Water.*'" Sometimes, if there were no sign of the pennies frequently given before the afternoon walk to buy some simple dainty for nursery tea, Baby would put in a reminder to his mother, rather to the scandalising of the little sister, who always seemed to dislike superfluities, and was apt to think about any procuring of things for her own use that there was already "quite enough," although when the question was of something for Baby, the pretty new frock or hat had all her interest. The pleasure of the provident boy in these little feasts, however, was a social one: he was always watchful that "Na-na" should have her share, and out of his own modest portion he would carry downstairs a precious gift "for Mother."

The little boy showed in his earliest years a steady sense of the rights of ownership; a desire that all persons, himself among them, should have and hold their respective belongings. Indeed, the only suggestion

that I could ever make to myself of anything less heavenly than the rest of him was in regard to this instinct of nature, useful, no doubt, in itself for life in a world that is not heaven. I think that it was, perhaps, the eager unstintedness in giving shown always by the little girl that made one notice, or fancy, a different natural bent in the more deliberate ways of the boy. The generosity of his nature was seen, indeed, from the first in a chivalrous sympathy and upholding of others, a giving of his heart; and though possibly, as regards more tangible things, the child in the beginnings of his nursery companionship may now and then have fallen short of his heart's sweet counsel, yet in his few years of increase "in wisdom and stature" the light of his love increased also, and he followed swiftly where it led. To me the most touching thing, perhaps, in Baby's short life is this: that even in the sphere of those affections that had not the absolute supremacy of his love and sympathy for his mother, our dear "soldier-

saint" came so early to a field of wider vision, where he fought his silent battle for liberal things, and won. I treasure the memory of a small surrender of rights—to the child, perhaps, it would not be small—concerning my last birthday gift, the coloured chalks. The feeling that Baby bestowed on such things was a sort of personal passion—it was almost, I fancy, as if those little pencils were not only the tools of his fascinating work, but themselves living pets, and formerly his inclination might have been to keep them for his own affectionate and purposeful grasp, and his own disposal in lending from time to time. But soon after he received them he was overheard saying: "You may use them whenever you like, Violet, without asking *me*—*without asking me*."

The little boy's conscience was always, as one could see, very sensitive. Rarely in his life was there occasion for reproof, and never once for punishment. As his mother said in his last winter: "I have just to tell

him not to do things, and he does not do them." But although he was not a child given to crying, and never made anything of tumbles or bruises, it was sometimes too much for him if his nurse shook her head with a show of disapproval. Latterly, indeed, as I noticed one day, he clearly understood that disapproving words were not always to be taken seriously. He was using, as he often did, his left hand for drawing. "Oh, Baby, you're doing it with your *naughty* hand," said his nurse in her gentle way, grave, with just a flicker of a smile of pride in her boy. Evidently this was taken as a merely conventional criticism, and the artist in his crib answered quite sweetly: "I *know* I'm doing it with my naughty hand," and went on with his work in his own fashion.

With respect to his standard of right and wrong, however, the child was quick to judge and to blame himself. One day at our house he had been playing at a shop with some little jars that I had lent him

and some beans in a small iron money-box, particularly fascinating to this small merchant; and when, before leaving, the children were gathering their possessions together, including some of the beans made up into a parcel for him, he said, with a curious little doubtful smile: "And shall I take my money-box?" I explained that I had not meant it to be taken away, and Violet, with her usual tact, remarked to me: "*You* will want it now"; and that was the end of it. But the little hint or request must have weighed on the conscience of the child, for the next day he told his mother about it, evidently troubled: "I asked Aunt G—— for her money-box." "But you shouldn't have done that, Baby," said his mother; and he answered in his sober way, as though out of the conviction of his own mind: "I know I shouldn't have done it"; yet smiled again, too; as it were, perhaps, over some novel sense of fun and daring discerned in the little misdeed.

Dear pilgrim on earthly soil! smiling

at his baby stumbles, yet seeking always that everything in his life, like his little hands, should be "frightfully clean," no shade that troubled him could seem to us more than a touch of "creamish" on the spotless robes of his innocence; yet, doubtless, he had the better counsel, desiring, unsatisfied here, to have them all white and glistening, as only a heavenly fuller could white them.

A few days before his last illness his mother (then very ill) called him back to her as he was leaving her room, and when she had him again beside her she told him how he had never in all his life made her sorry, had always been good and obedient and loving and most sweet to her. But the child would not take to himself his mother's praise. "Oh no, Mother! only big people are always good; they are *meant* to be; children are sometimes naughty. But I try to be good," he added, "and when I'm big I'll be always good."

It seemed, indeed, as if the little spirit

had not only received from hearsay the conviction that every child was sometimes bad, but that he had always before him an ideal of goodness yet to be attained. Then there were his little well-known duties, and he was quick to feel the slightest failure in fulfilling them. A few days before his last illness, when his mother called to him as he was playing alone near her room to put away his bricks into their box, she heard him burst into tears, and knowing that he was tired, and still weak after croup, she told him not to mind, as Violet would do it for him soon. But the little boy was ashamed of his failure, as he thought, in duty that belonged to him, and sitting alone there he sobbed as if quite heart-broken.

No doubt the trouble of spirit that day, like the physical languor, came from the weakness of convalescence. But, looking at all things in those few years, I feel that the child had really in one way and another the essential experience and virtue of life as

men have it here: in the tranquil purity of his heart rejoicing in its gladness and running its race and fighting its battles—and even weeping a few of its brief, early tears. I always feel about him that he had everything, and in this short time passed through the spiritual stages of our human course.

And it may be, perhaps, that this middle stage of effort and conflict with temptation, and endurance and growth, is the one most specifically human of all, and the one most belonging to the way of the Son of Man. There seems to be something in the utter simplicity of love and goodness seen in a very little child that is of witness to the Father above: it is here, unconscious of self, not striving; we see it, and know that it comes from elsewhere. But later, through all the years, whether many or few, of testing and choice and endeavour, is attained and made manifest more completely the righteousness of the Son: who in the days of His flesh learned also “obedience

by the things which He suffered." And later still, perhaps in old age, perhaps at the end of a little child's warfare, we behold the Peace of the Spirit.

Yet these three glories are in God one Love, and to man one Joy.

BABY'S EVENING PRAYER

"Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me,
Bless Thy little lamb to-night;
Through the darkness be Thou near me;
Watch my sleep till morning light.

All this day Thy hand hath led me,
And I thank Thee for Thy care;
Thou hast clothed me, warmed and fed me;
Listen to my evening prayer.

Let my sins be all forgiven;
Bless the friends I love so well;
Take me, when I die, to heaven,
Happy there with Thee to dwell."

PART II
IN THE GARDEN



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CHAPTER I

THE HEART OF A CHILD

"Perfect love casteth out fear."—1 JOHN iv. 18.

" . . . How much less strong is Death than Love.
Be Love but there ; let poor six years
Be posed with the maturest fears
Man trembles 'at, you straight shall find
Love knows no nonage, nor the mind ;
'Tis love, not years or limbs that can
Make the martyr, or the man."

RICHARD CRASHAW
("Hymn to S. Teresa").

THINKING further of the child who held our thoughts as he stepped before us on his morning way, one remembers how the boyish instinct for courage was reinforced by that mind of self-assuring, determined trust which in him was always ready, and which overcame a certain great sensitiveness—a shrinking from any too sudden impact of new experience. To face things unfamiliar seemed to require a moment's

considering and effort. He had no pets of his own, and during his first two or three years, although he showed a desire to make friends with animals, and would call to them from some distance, he would visibly draw back if even a kitten came very close. Having seen those uncertainties, guessed at those little tremors, one wondered the more at the swiftness of the spirit's growth in a child to whom, in time so brief, the encounter of a runaway horse was a delightful adventure, and who even for the terrible, threatening horses of delirious dreams, had a smile of tender understanding.

Of the dark the little boy was never at any time afraid.

As to braveness in perseverance and in the enduring of pain, that was part of the ideal and battle and dear achievement of the little boy in his cheerful life and his cheerful death.

It was most especially in his sympathetic courtesy, I think, that the sensitiveness of the child was shown. Instructed from his

earliest year in the baby graces of behaviour, as he grew older he came to take a particular pleasure in those small restraints and attentions that belonged to his part as "a man"—such as never going in front of a lady, opening the door for mother, sister, any visitor (but not for "Daddy": "Men don't do such fings for one anover"). And those courteous forms were only one outlet of a chivalrous spirit that showed itself readily as occasion arose. He always seemed to know what others must like or dislike; in a way that one felt as strange in a child so young, he would speak the appreciative word and stop short before the too blunt one. I remember how, the day before he was taken ill, finding his own little pocket empty, he asked me for a handkerchief, and being given one less fine in texture than those to which he was accustomed, he glanced down at it with something of an air of perplexed discomfort, and began: "It's not——" Then, as if fearing to say anything impolite, after a moment's hesi-

tation he finished, in a low voice, almost to himself: "Mother's," and put it up again to his soft little face.

People used often to say of Baby: "He is such a friendly little boy!" It was only in his last winter that he felt some difficulty of shyness when sent for to see strangers. However, he would enter the room bravely, and with set mouth and grave face walk up to shake hands, saying in his clear tones: "How do you do?" then pass to his mother's side, and lean against her, with a sigh of relief over the difficult duty done. And very soon he would get over his sense of strangeness, responding to the kindly visitor with talk or frolic in the happiness of that trust which he had in the kindness of all.

Of those whom they loved the children talked often; and always to the grandparents, abroad in winter, one message at least was sent from each: "My loving kiss." There was a special friendship also between the little boy and his grand-uncle, "Uncle

John"—lover of books and of nature, lover of God and of children—to whose time-furrowed face, with its strong individuality of expression—quiet in absorption with the thoughts and visions of his ninety years, yet in conversation so quickly enkindled, showing so well the keen mind and humorous, kindly nature—I used from the first now and then to fancy some quaint resemblance of family look in the soft, smooth face of his tiny kinsman. His visits were frequent; and sometimes the children drove out to see him in the old book-lined house on the Hill that he loved—the Hill where he fell on the last of his sunrise walks. The editor of the work he left has told me that amongst the many papers were notes which the old man had taken from time to time of sayings of the little boy.

Although with the children whom he sometimes met in the gardens or neighbour-streets Baby was a little silent—having, indeed, some feeling that he “did not know them”—there were one or two of Violet’s

little friends whom he specially loved—very little ones of two and three years old. Indeed, the child, himself so small and sweet, seemed to find a great enchantment in things little or, as it were, of early life. I remember him walking about the room carrying on his little arm a daisy, as if it were a baby, caressing it. His soft, white, woolly lamb, which he used to have in his crib beside him; his very little white china puppy-dog, which sometimes went out with him in his mail-cart; the little white duck that his mother gave him, which often he carried about close in his hand for sheer affection; a little flower, a tiny toy—with such things the little boy seemed to feel a young companionship of tender delight.

Of his love to his father and mother I have hesitated to write, chiefly because the love of a child cannot well be separated from the love it meets; and such things are all sacred. Yet one thinks: Is speech always less sacred than silence? And how

could one really describe the child, leaving out this central part of his life?

One could see in those happy evening and Sunday hours the joy and perfect trust that he had in "Daddy"—his friend and comrade and teacher. I have in remembrance the look of the little son on his father's knee; his eager, questioning talk; his comments, brightly serious, on stories told; his logical little criticisms. I remember, too, the abandonment of the small figure fearlessly falling back in the supporting arms with melodious gurgles of laughter. Then there were those high chimes of mirth, shaken out, as it were, over the rarer excitements of baby "high jumps" and shoulder rides, and the joy more tense of dangerous balancings that no woman could like to look at even. When the two were seated again, and talking soberly, by-and-by, perhaps, the "Ride to London" would be started; and *then* what a rise of spirits began, set agoing by the gingerly ride of "the ladies"—a sensation rather to be regarded

with a very mild interest than to be personally enjoyed, or at any rate to be enjoyed only as an artistic introduction to the delightful freedom of the gentlemen's ride and the tremendous gallop of "the cadgers." Sometimes the little boy would plead: "I think we ought to *begin* with 'the cadgers' ride,' Daddy." Other scenes also are dear to memory—the child carried up and down the lamplit room; the high voice prattling sweetly, the deeper voice answering in tones of tender amusement; the claspings, the little endearments. And, again, there was the music—the silent entrancement of the child, gravely intent, as he stood by his father's side to listen. When his father used to come home in the afternoon, and find him building with his bricks, Baby would stop, and ask him to "play some music," and would sit upon his knee at the piano for perhaps ten minutes; then he would slip down, and go to his bricks. But in a minute or two he would come back to the piano, pleading: "Enough

music, Dad!" because he could not go on with his play for listening, so long as the music lasted. And sometimes—on Sundays always—there was the singing. I remember, from one of the last Sundays, the father playing, the mother and children standing singing. Violet chose that most touching of children's hymns, with the lovely, pathetic Greek air: "I think, when I read that sweet story of old"; and Baby asked for "that hymn with 'Alleluia'"—"For all the saints who from their labours rest." I remember the sweet, strong voice of the boy, as he stood by his father's side, joining ardently in the "Alleluias." Little singer, so soon to be with the saints in their Paradise, surely they would welcome him there: "Ecco chi crescerà li nostri amori!"¹
—*Here is one who shall increase our love!*

The love of a little son and his mother, too intimate for full understanding, is also too sacred for any attempt at full portrayal, and when the child is dead, the past of that

¹ "Paradiso," v. 105.

love is a treasure bound up with sorrows that can never be set forth. Yet there could not be any real picture of the child that did not show, at least in some dim and shadowy way, his mother beside him. One saw in him all that a little child—baby and only son—could by common ways of nature be, for present possession and dream of the coming days: the little body and soul a joy, a wonder, a care, a tender pride, perpetual outlet for love; the very clothing, prettily planned and finely wrought, betokening surely in our human kindness a lowly outgrowth of that divine and tender joy which arrays with the lilies the grass of the field, and is always clothing things of this earth and of heaven—the pastures with flocks, the victors with white raiment, the sons who were lost with the garments of salvation, “coloured as none can describe.” Dear glistening robes and white smocks of our earth-born “Baby,” dear winter coat of “the little boy” made glad by its “reddish purple,” doubtless of Love’s innocence

and Love's purity is your whiteness too, of Love's triumphant sacrifice is your deep red. Sacred are all such handiworks of earth; for in our human story are there not folded up the swaddling-bands of Bethlehem's Mother-kindness; the garment for Galilee's Brotherly Ministering—seamless, and woven from the top throughout; the purple robe of Divine Redemption, offered from the failing hands of hatred, but prepared by the heart of Immortal Love? So in the heavenly vision the seer still beholds the Warrior Faithful and True whose vesture is dipped in blood, and the gathered riding armies that follow, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. A flower of the field, a little child's frock, a spirit's fairness—threefold glory to the Trinity of Love.—

But I think that it was, perhaps, in a way even beyond the common ways of mother and child that in a very short time the little boy became to his mother, through some special sympathy between them, “the

most perfect companion," a little understanding friend by her side—"such a help and comfort; always so gentle and considerate." He was a child unfailing in obedience, with an enthusiasm for learning and practising things of beauty in character and conduct; but this special communion of love was a thing by itself, even as he in himself, beyond all that could be given in deeds or language, was a presence reviving and gladdening: "he was such a support, and gave such new life." The grave, sweet, watchful eyes, the little tenderly stroking hands and embracing arms, with the sudden overflow in words: "Oh, my darling, darling Mother!" told fully of the child's love at all times and of his desire to comfort whenever he guessed some need. Yet sometimes he would try to frame in his baby speech the devotion of his heart. "You're the best mother I ever had!" he exclaimed one day; and regardless of Violet's laughing exclamation: "I wonder who the worst one was?" he took

to calling her often "My best Mother." I remember too, from the time of an illness of his mother's, when he was newly three, how one day he stood for a little while gazing at her, and then exclaimed: "Mother, you look like a princess!" When his mother was in her room she often had him beside her. He used to play "Coo-trains" up and down, "dashing about in the highest spirits," and then when he was tired he would sit perched up beside her, "either playing cabs or talking in his own peculiar funny little way, raising his eyebrows and nodding his head," and asking her "all sorts of strange things." After being very quiet one time he came up to her, and said: "What is the world, Mother? What is it?"

A love so intense as his could not, perhaps, as things are here, be given without some suffering of spirit—scarcely conscious and gentle, such as even a child in his happy peace can experience. One day, in the last winter, when his mother was very ill, the

little boy and I were going along the passage to her room, and as I thought that if he ran about as usual when there it might do her harm, I said to him: "We won't make a noise; you will just sit beside her, won't you, and be kind to her" (stroking her in his caressing way, I meant), "and make her better?" Most strange was the look of tragedy that came over his little pale face, and the sudden deepness which his voice went into as he answered: "But I *can't* make her better." It was as if the experience of life's great sorrow in love's unavailingness had been sounded by the child whose hand—so far down—I held; as if he had tried his utmost, and knew the limit of his power, and accepted that sorrow in quietness. It seemed, indeed, as if his love, so quick to discern the Cross, had strength to bear it.

And, perhaps, in this the child was given the greatest gift, though not a gift of our choosing. For sharing in pain his love

became perfect, passing the dear love of children.

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“And I saw that there was an Ocean of Darkness and Death ; but an infinite Ocean of Light and Love flowed over the Ocean of Darkness : and in that I saw the infinite Love of God.”

CHAPTER II

"GOOD-BYE"

" . . . In

A fair, white page of thin
And ev'n, smooth lines, like the Sun's rays,
Thy name was writ, and all thy days.
O bright and happy Kalendar !
Where youth shines like a star
All pearl'd with tears, and may
Teach age *The Holy Way* ;
Where through thick pangs, high agonies,
Faith into life breaks, and death dies."

HENRY VAUGHAN.

I COME now to the record of the little boy's last week — Monday the 6th, to Saturday the 11th, of March 1899.

During the Monday and Tuesday he and I were a good deal together by ourselves, for his mother was ill, and as Violet had some kind of cold he was kept out of the nursery.

I had sometimes told the children that they should see the wall paintings by Mrs

Traquair in the Song School of the Cathedral, but the visit had not yet been made. So on Monday, as Baby and I passed that way on our morning walk, I took him in there. First we went into the Cathedral, walking slowly up towards the altar. I do not know how it was, but the stillness of the child whom I held by the hand, and his upward gazing amongst the arches and glowing windows, made me feel that the beauty of the place had fallen upon him with something of awe.

We passed, however, almost immediately into the Song School. And there we followed the praiseful procession of the "Benedicite Omnia Opera"—Song of the Lord's Three Children: harping of harps from the spirit spheres, whose music is yet unheard below; soundings from organs and lyres of the winds and the waters, with lowliest breathings from meadows and hills; voices in divers tones—here a cry, there a song—from beast and bird and little child, from "holy and humble men of heart": "SANCTUS,

SANCTUS, SANCTUS. *Amen. Amen.* “As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there.” Entranced in wonder, the child stood and gazed on angels of heaven and white-robed singers of earth, wind-wafted flames and storm-spiced mortals, rainbowed skies and lonely springs, carnations and roses of June, and the Christmas Babe of winter. A vision of unknown fairness it must have been to this little lover of all things fair: the few words that came — some low-voiced murmur of “Lovely pictures!” — are now forgotten, but in his silence and stillness he seemed, as it were, to stand in a porch of that heavenly beauty which already his heart had risen to desire. “Lift up your heads, O ye gates, even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.” All through his life the boy was eager to lift up the gates of his soul to things that were lovely and pure; all through his life he found set before him doors that were open to heaven.

Passing from the Cathedral enclosure, and on by the quiet, grey street, we came to the region of attractive windows with flowers and toys and sweets, and now and again a halt was made. One little shop on the homeward way showed a pile of all sorts and sizes of india-rubber balls, and Baby was so evidently fascinated with the very smallest grey ones that, though he said nothing about wanting one, I resolved to get one for him next day. I heard afterwards that he told his mother about them and how much he would like to have one.

“Only babies sleep in the daytime,” so after lunch the little boy took to drawing pictures; while I wrote my letter for Italy, with fragments of the little grandson’s talk inserted. I had to explain to him that the printed lettering on my paper gave the name of “Granny’s house.” “*Grandfather’s* house,” corrected Baby, smilingly. To the question; “What are a pigeon’s legs like—are they just long fins?” I gave a hesitating assent; but Baby, rejecting on second thoughts this

somewhat vague description, continued, in his most earnest tones: "No; they aren't just long fings. Are they like a hen's legs?" Other searching questions were as to what "the insides" of certain flowers were like.

By-and-by the little boy took to racing up and down the room, making the circuit of the long dining-table in the character of "a galloping tramway horse." Suddenly the play stopped, the child came up to me as I wrote, and gazing at me with his eyes full of a thought, asked me: "Is this world always going round—*now*?" "Yes," I said; and he continued, with a strange intensity of look and voice, as if standing there he steadily set himself to feel the immobility of stable earth, and yet in some way of thought to realise the motion unceasing which he had learnt of but could not detect: "We can't feel it; it stays still—*still*." Then he added, almost in the same breath, as though from some sight of analogy in the truth of things invisible:

"JESUS is looking down now. We can't see Him." And away he ran to his play again.

On the Tuesday morning, when I arrived to take Baby out for another walk, I found him in his mother's room playing with his pictured alphabet blocks—a Christmas present. He now knew all the letters of the alphabet, and had some idea of their sounds in use. This morning he had arranged the blocks in order on the floor, all except two—the last two—which were lying face downwards. We turned them up, and put them in their places—and the little boy's task was finished. I remember, too, the way he looked down at his hands, which, I suppose, had been newly washed, and the happy tones in which he said: "My hands are clean now—*frightfully* clean!"

As we started hand in hand for our walk that day, Baby, looking up to me, opened the conversation with a subject on which, no doubt, he had been meditating: "America must be a beautiful place! It

is large enough to have battles there ; Nurse told me." (It was the time of the Spanish-American war.) And then he added, with a little wistfulness in the emphatic inflection of his voice: "*All* soldiers are *brave*, aren't they—even the wicked soldiers?" (His mother has told me that Baby's ideal and resolve was to be a soldier, so as to do away with "the wicked people," although his own predilection was for the sociable and ever-interesting business of a grocer.)

Our walk again took us past fruit and flower shops, and as we were standing before a window, admiring the "lovely flowers," I suddenly heard the childish voice at the window-sill, in its deepest tones, ejaculate: "*Horrible!* Red and yellow tulips is *horrible!*"

I remember of our lunch together that day how pleased the little boy was to have rhubarb, having been entranced with its lovely pink colour in a shop window the morning before.

Afterwards, while Baby played with his new ball (I had made the purchase), for the first time I began to write some notes of his talk, bringing from the previous day my tale of trifles, sayings small, but coming at first, and still to memory coming, with a sudden freshness like the drops from some bright shower of April. Few things, however, were written, for Baby was in such delight over his tiny ball that I could not but join him in his play. How glad I am that I did! He played in the most glee-ful way, rolling the ball across the table to me, with peals of his delicious laughter whenever he or I missed catching it.

At our afternoon tea together the little boy told me about "a wild horse" which the children and their nurse had encountered on a road towards the country about a week before this. It had come on to the side walk close to them, and the nurse told us that Baby was the only one of the little standing group who had not shown any fear. He was, indeed, delighted with the adventure,

and afterwards said to his mother : " I wish wild horses would *always* come on the pavement ! " He described to me how the horse was galloping along the road with a man on it. " Was the man frightened ? " I asked. " No," said Baby, and then added : " I don't fink it was galloping much *to him*."

Afterwards he was playing with his bricks, and before I left I began to help him to arrange them for putting away before he went to bed. But the child said, with a strange gravity : " *I* should put them away." I said : " Yes ; but you are tired to-day, so I will help you." And we finished the work together.

That was to be my last day of companionship with the little boy in work and play and meals together. He was to go back to the nursery that evening, as Violet's illness had proved to be slight.

On Wednesday morning it was too wet to take him out, but I saw him for a few minutes as he was playing in the nursery. After I had asked for the invalids I said,

merely for custom: "And are *you* quite well?" "No," he said with quaint solemnity. But there was not any sign or thought of illness then. As I afterwards wrote to a friend: "He seemed in rather a merry, gently mischievous mood, and having lately called me 'Aunt Grace' instead of by the old diminutive of the children's use, he to-day called me simply 'Grace.' I thought that it meant, perhaps, some playful recognition of our new comradeship."

This was the last time that I saw the little boy who was my friend running about in play. I soon had to go, and then he and I said "Good-bye."

CHAPTER III

THE PASSING

"Enter into His Gates with thanksgiving, and into His Courts with praise."—PSALM c. 4.

"And He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them."—St MARK xiv. 23.

As I think of the night when we watched by the little boy dying I remember how, on one of the last times that the children came to our house, on leaving my room they stopped to look at two pictures—paintings by Mrs Traquair. Violet spoke of the one made after a medallion in the "Sequence of Creation" series in the Song School, beneath the Procession of Praise: the Spirit of Love baptising with His fire of strength the newly awakened human spirit, bowed down in its weakness. But the painting that most attracted the little boy was "Love and the Cup." The Spirit of Love, robed in the

white of purity, has wings the colour of flame, and hair that on either side is spreading in waves from the aureoled head across all the sky of the picture. The face, which fronts one straightly, is set to a silence like the silence of the sphinx, yet seems to attest an immovable knowledge of good in those things of truth and abiding which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard." For in the open, far-fixed gaze of the eyes is a peace that beholds and accepts all the sorrowful failings and breakings in Time, in the vision of that Fulfilment which is and which shall be. This picture is after one designed as part of the scheme of wall painting on the little Mortuary Chapel of the Children's Hospital here. Love holds the cup of Death and of Life, of many dyings and of one life; the ancient serpent of evil, which wounds to death, is coiled round the stem; but the Crucifix, which shows the lifting up from the earth of the soul and body in suffering for love, and the drawing of man thereby through death to a higher life,

is carved above on the chalice. The brim of the chalice glows a deep red with the sacred wine. Close gathered round are those who have come to partake of this Sacrament of the only love; their robes are coloured of the amethyst of suffering and the fair, faint green of hope; the Cup that is raised in Love's hand is theirs, though rather withheld than offered: for "who is sufficient for these things?" Three have already partaken, and are sinking through death to that beatitude "set before" them, beyond the loss and above the pain—the eternal communion of Love. Two are waiting; the one on the breast of Love looks on the face of the other by her side, who first partakes of the Cup; and that other, with hands upraised to receive, looks only on the Crucifix of the chalice of Love. "Can ye drink of the Cup that I drink of?" is the name of the picture.

Answering some words of Baby's, I said that it meant that "dying is not a dreadful or sad thing, but a 'kind' and a happy

thing." "*I don't want to die!*" answered Baby with decision, I said: "Oh no; of course not; it isn't the time yet." And it seemed as if the child rested satisfied to leave this affair of dying as a thing no doubt appointed for some far-away stage of his life. Afterwards, when he had gone through the gates that opened before him swiftly and wide on his way—that way so short and straight and cheerful—to the Spiritual City, we were given this strangely worded remnant of the children's talks together: "Till last winter," said Violet, "Baby would never give in to death." She added that then, during that winter, he had come to "give in" to it.

From Violet we heard afterwards that the week before he died he had sometimes been speaking of heaven: "I wish I could go to heaven, Violet, to see the lovely angels and beautiful gardens and flowers."

But one feels that no thought of beautiful things on earth or in heaven would have made the child wish to stay for long from

his home. With attempts at consolation we talk of happiness gained and evil escaped by early death ; and there is, indeed, a great and inviolable joy in a life sent up on high all pure and perfect, with many gifts of the earth, but without a stain of the world—"innocent, yet mature." Still, while we comfort ourselves in the larger good of those gone, which being their good must be ours no less, sometimes we can hardly imagine the one whom our hearts knew here making choice of a life that to us seems elsewhere. The truth must surely be that their greatest gain is something deeper and higher and wider than their happy immunity from woe and their increase of wellbeing. Their chiefest blessedness, our firmest consolation, must be together within that wide-ruling purpose of good, in scope and fulfilment by us unimaginable—the Will of God. On this we can set our faith, towards this we can send our hopes, in this is Death's justification ; in this and in that deepest, most common want of life as we know it here, the desire

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1940-1941

1942-1943

1944-1945

1946-1947

1948-1949

1950-1951

1952-1953

1954-1955

1956-1957

1958-1959

1960-1961

1962-1963

From the time I was born, I have been
reading and listening to the story of the
boy who was taken from his home and
of the boy who was taken from his home.
I am having to read and listen to the
story of the boy who was taken from his home
and of the boy who was taken from his home.
The story of the boy who was taken from his home
is a story of the boy who was taken from his home
and of the boy who was taken from his home.

Why I went on the trip
He told me I was told to go.



which even a child in its unperturbed sweetness of waiting can feel, for a fuller, simpler sense of His presence who always is our home. Afterwards—after the little boy had been called from earth—there was laid for a time on his breast a crucifix. A few days before his illness began, finding it as he ran about the room, he had come up with it to his father, and said: “Daddy, when we’ll be dead we’ll see this Person, ’cos it’s Jesus.” He was girt and ready to go.

Abi! Abi! anima Christiana!

From the letters and a record lent to me regarding the last three days of the little boy’s life and the days immediately following I am leaving out a few sentences that touch too closely on the deep and silent places of love and sorrow. The rest—the story of the child himself—I think should be given.

When I went on the Thursday evening to his house I was told that Baby was ill; but

I did not go into the nursery, in case of disturbing him. A nurse had been got for himself, and the doctor had come several times to see him, partly, no doubt, because the child's parents were seriously ill, and could not either of them be allowed as yet to go to him. He had occasionally in other years had turns of illness like this—feverishness with recurrent sickness—and had quickly recovered from them, and even on Friday morning, at the time of the doctor's early visit, there was nothing to cause great alarm; but when the doctor returned later, between ten and eleven, the symptoms were worse. His mother was now given leave to come upstairs, and his father was told that he might be with him from time to time. A second nurse was got, and two consulting doctors came twice, but if there was any hope of his recovery it was very slight. The illness had no decided character, but it was afterwards thought that it must have been from some sort of influenza poison, which finally caused

collapse of the heart. His own doctor, who had a great affection for the little boy, stayed at hand during most of the day, seeing him often, and, along with the nurses, doing all that could be done to save him ; then late in the evening he came, and stayed in the house till half-past four the next morning. By that time there was nothing that could be done in the way of cure. At six o'clock he was sent for again, as it was seen that the end was near. About that hour the child, who through all this mortal weakness and failure of the body had been altogether himself in gentle brightness of spirit, swiftly fell into that sleep which comes before death, and in less than half-an-hour he had passed away, with breathings so soft that those at watch could scarcely tell when the last breath came and went.

Writings after the death of the child

From my letter to a friend :

“ When I called on the Friday morning

I went into the nursery, and found Baby sitting up in his crib. Such a change there was in his little face, already wasted and darkened, with all the look of death in it—and that family look which comes so often in dying. Still, I was kept in hope, because he was sitting up, and he took with pleasure the flowers I brought him—not forgetting his careful ‘Thank you.’ I had brought a little mother-of-pearl box, and his mother had put inside it a threepenny-piece for the Baby who cherished small things. (Violet told me afterwards how on Wednesday he had been carrying about and kissing the tiny ball I had given him the day before.) He took in his little white hand the iridescent shell, and looked at it. ‘What is it for?’ he asked, and when I said that it was to hold any small thing, he added: ‘It’s the shape of an egg.’ He was as interested as ever in noting things, but I remember his look of great gravity and the faint, slower sound of his voice in its gentle clearness. Then he asked me to put the toy

on the chimney-piece above his cot, and his flowers were also set there in water—near, though above him.

“He gave me his messages: his ‘loving kiss’ for his grandparents and one of his aunts, then in Italy, and he remembered himself to send his love to another at home, and not well. In passing from the nursery I kissed my hand to him, and he kissed his to me in his accustomed way, though it needed a little effort, I think. After that I did not stay in the room, as his parents were sent for. When they were with him the clear, sweet babble of the child’s voice (with the reasonable gentleness of his spirit in all its high tones and changing inflections even in moments of wandering) was heard more continuously. They tried not to have much talking with him, so as not to have his strength used up. But how one did desire to hear everything he might say in this short time of speech together!”

Here are two remembered sentences from the musings of the little boy, who against

the downcastings of mortal sickness found help, perhaps, in those plays of his innocent fancy over mishaps that seemed tragic and yet absurd: "Wouldn't it be *dreadful* if a man went in front of a lady?" "Wouldn't it be dreadful if you forgot and spoke out loud in church?"

No complaining came from the child through all the hours, though even on the first night of his illness he had had little sleep and had been tossing about and murmuring to himself: "I'm so tired, and I can't sleep!" His heart was set upon being brave. Just once I heard, as a poultice was being laid on, a piteous little cry: "Oh, take it away!" but a moment afterwards he let it be laid upon him without a word.

Once the little boy spoke of a river "awfully deep." Afterwards I heard that he had exclaimed (I do not know whether it was of a sight on that river): "Oh, the little white duck!" and then added: "But perhaps it's a swan." Possibly he

had heard Hans Andersen's story, and remembered the "duckling" that proved to be a swan, but in any case the words were altogether in keeping with the little boy's ways of careful distinguishing and of looking for the best from every creature. I can hear the wistful, tender way he would say it, the upward lilt of his voice at "perhaps." And I think that one would have chosen just this, if one could have thought of it, that Baby should find a little white duck on the river of death.

The nurse put some eau de Cologne on his pillow, and he said: "That's delicious!" (Violet laughed at the long word when I told her, and said: "Baby loves long words—like 'important.'")

Once when I went for a moment into the nursery, after they had ceased to try to feed him except with iced water, as I passed by his crib to get a look of him he said to me: "What is your favourite kind of water, Aunt Gracie?" I answered that I thought iced water was very nice; and he said that

that was his favourite, adding: "I think it's delicious."

These must have been the last words that Baby spoke to me. Dear little voice, that was always praising things and giving thanks, and that so lately, on the clouded winter day of darkness, had piped to me its cheerful refrain: "We're having a very merry Christmas, aren't we?" in the faintness of death it still rose sweet, true to its melody of thanksgiving.

"Morning, evening, noon and night,
'Praise God,' sang Theocrite."

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Extract taken from a letter written to the child's grandfather:

"On Wednesday morning he was singing and clattering about the house as usual. In the afternoon I noticed that the fun had stopped, and about six I went to the nursery door. I saw him in his little blue jersey and trousers lying curled up on his crib, inclined to be quiet. Next day . . . I heard his bright little voice all day, and

though he was in bed I had no doubt that he was getting on well. On Friday morning I was told he was rather better; but a very sudden change took place. . . . The sight of his little face was a great shock. From being his very best in health and spirits on Wednesday he was changed completely, and his face was that of a dying child. . . .

“His fun and thoughtfulness for others and self-reliant courage never left him. He lay trying to make up funny little words—‘*Apesy*: that means Nurse’s apron’—and repeating snatches of his lessons, the days of the week, and the letters of the alphabet, grouping them according to his choice, some letters being favourites, and others—‘I don’t like these ones.’ He would admit no pain or discomfort: the efforts to make him better, but not their painful and trying nature, he constantly spoke of. His heart was set all through on being brave—‘as brave as a soldier,’ and then ‘as a soldier in battle.’

“Once my little boy said, an hour or two

before the end : ‘ Oh, Daddy, isn’t the river awfully deep ? ’ But I don’t think he meant to speak of death. He spoke, too, of the great light above him ; but it had no special significance to him, I think. . . . I like to think of how once, when fearing that things were dark, and he might feel frightened, I said to him : ‘ Daddy will keep his own little boy safe,’ he looked happy, but said after a little while : ‘ But I can keep *myself* quite safe, Daddy.’

“ He was not told that he was dying. . . . When he was wandering a little, and we were trying to help him, he suddenly shut his eyes, and folded his hands with the most perfect air of putting himself apart from everything and everybody, and said : ‘ Thank you, Jesus, for giving us nice food. For Jesus’ sake. Amen ’—his customary grace after meat. Poor little chap ! he had been able for no food for two days, and had had only half-an-hour’s sleep in two nights. A little later he repeated the grace in the same way.

"He asked once: 'Am I ill enough to sleep in Daddy's bed?' but added: 'But, perhaps, we would give each other more—perhaps I would give Daddy more'—meaning infection. He knew me as long as he was conscious. Pointing to his mother, he said: 'That's a picture of Mother. And who is that picture? Nurse?'

"At the end, when his brain was becoming exhausted, there were terrors about his way—sudden shrinking panics. I held his little hands tight. Once he said: 'Oh, Daddy, there's wild horses trying to bite me!' I said they were kind horses, playing at being wild, and he gave a little 'Oh!' of delighted surprise—almost as if he were sorry to have misjudged them. I think these fears were simply stoppages of the heart, and they passed quickly. . . .

"And I think that in the fight it was not death and the grave that had the victory. . . ."

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war.

“And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.”

Very near the end of the last long night—too short for us—I, being at watch outside the nursery door, heard Baby ask: “Can I have my toys?” When his father asked which he would like to have, he named, I think, his alphabet blocks and a wooden dinner-set, but ended by choosing as the one that he wanted his little copper watering-can: “To water my flowers with *real* water.” So his father took down the glass with the flowers that I had brought to Baby in the morning—pink anemones, daffodils, and white tulips—Baby had been talking away about “white tulip buds.” I heard him ask if he might hold the watering-can, and his father say that he was afraid

he would not be able. Then the flowers in their vase were held up by his cot, and his mother helped to hold him raised up and bending over them, while his father helped him to water them from the little can. (A record adds: "We were asking each other who had given it to him, as we could not remember. 'Aunt Julia,' said Baby clearly; and then we remembered she had given it to him at Christmas-time. After that he asked his father to water his head; and then he got the bright, golden-looking little can in his own hand, and was so pleased to have it.") I was told afterwards how Baby had wished to drink of this real water—poor little thirsting flower—and had then tried to sprinkle some drops on his head. When Violet was told of the sprinkling of his forehead she said: "Perhaps he was trying to christen himself for the other world."

As the morning began to come in I—far down on the staircase—heard again his voice, repeating his grace of thanksgiving.

and then came, loud and clear, more like a call, his "Amen." And then he said once again, more faintly: "Amen."

That was his last word for earth—his last word, unless for the name of that sweet country of his young fancy's desire, of his dreams and playful journeyings, which his father heard him whisper as, a few moments later, the child entered softly at last upon sleep: "Gheeston!"

After the falling asleep had come, and it could no longer harm him to have people round him, and the end was very near, I went into the nursery and stood by his cot. He lay on his side, his eyes almost closed, his breathing gentle though quick; his hands were held together clasped in his father's. . . . He was going, and as he went, perpetual words of love and praise were being murmured to him: "Little sweetheart!" "Little soldier!"—and words too sacredly tender for saying to any but him. His own nurse stood near the foot of his crib, bowed in a silence of grief. The other

nurses and maids were standing round, and soon the doctor returned to watch to the end. The earliest sunlight began to stream in through the nursery window behind the cot.

In the midst of all the pains of losing, the prevision of that destined, fast-coming loss, final for all this life, which one did not dare to let oneself feel or think of then, it was to me a wonderful thing to look upon the little child in his mortal weakness and undying strength. Thoughts came passing of the witness that he bore to the lasting life of the spirit; and, beyond all thoughts, to me it seemed as if I were filled with the vision of a strange perfection. Even as regards the body, the dying of the little boy was all like himself and his way in life: exquisite, finished, orderly, pervaded by spirit. It gave one the feeling that he took and followed a path appointed; yet scarcely a pilgrim's toilsome travel, rather the sacred, joyous adventure of some knight of the early poets—Galahad, in his white inno-

cence of purity unspotted ; Percival victorious in the glow of his compassionate ardour—setting forth in the freshness of Maytime, through woodland and wilderness, a spirit elect to seek and to serve the Grail of the Heavenly Love. For although the child lay so composed and quiet, at rest on his pillow, it seemed all the time as if he were going onwards, and as if he knew it, and went with a will.

I think that not only to me a conception of this kind came, for one of the watchers said, in looking on the fair, sweet face of the little one dead, who had

“Loved chivalry,
Truth and honour, freedom and courtesy,”

“He was a very perfect, gentle knight.”

From a letter: “It was all like himself: beautiful and perfect and regular ; the only movement one little straightening of himself shortly before the end. It was a strange thing to think of at a baby’s death, but one felt that he was, as one of those there ex-

claimed to him, cheering him on, as it were, in his steady course, a 'gallant little gentleman,' dying with a faithful, unflinching spirit and a strange, harmonious fineness."

So I wrote at the time: for the quiet form and the breathing that seemed as if measured while growing fainter and fainter, gave one the feeling of something fair and well-ordered, something almost processional, that made the watching of the spirit's departure like listening to music—orchestral music, fulfilling itself in measure upon measure, cadence upon cadence, sounding softly, and still more softly, till lost in the utter silence.

Of this harmony achieved by the spirit in life, and this quiet accorded even to the body in death, my letter told. But hitherto I have not cared to tell of the thought of divine manifestation that came as I looked on the dying of the child, at peace and victorious, the difficult part set before him fulfilled without failure or flaw. The hours of trial were over, the offerings rendered,

but their consecration was upon him for ever—a high and tender beauty; and now as in silence he followed to the end the last brief stage of his way, there rose in the mind of the watcher of this scarce-conscious little son of earth and time a remembrance of the Coming of the Heavenly Eternal Christ, who, bringing near to us all the ways of His gentleness, did not disdain to show in Himself the heart, to take to Himself the form, of a child. It was as though here again, in our nursery-room, were vouchsafed some sweet abiding of the infant graces that dwell in the Son of Man; as though here again, in this elect hour of our common day, we beheld some lowly visitation of the Spirit of Immortal Love. That ancient word comes back to mind: “Made the First-born among many brethren.” We saw it here: we could not but see that the spirit of the child—“one of these little ones”—reached into fellowship of brotherhood even with Him: coming through those brief years “unto the stature

of the perfect Man" in Him whose message through life was "Fear not" and "Follow," whose peace in dying fell on His work fulfilled and rose to the Eternal Father's reception.

"For this Thy servant, departed this life in Thy faith and fear, we bless Thy holy name."

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Notes gathered from a short Record :

"J. D. . . . died on Saturday morning at 6.30. 11th March."

"He was ill just two days. On Wednesday, the 8th, he was dancing about his mother's room in the morning, with rosy cheeks and sparkling eyes, running and playing 'coo-trains' and 'kling-trains' and wild horses. Then he came up to her, and said his alphabet through, and after he had finished he said he would like to say a verse of a hymn they had been teaching him. He stood looking at her with his sweet, grave eyes, saying, slowly and distinctly :

'There is a tender Shepherd
Who leads us day by day,
And we must gladly follow
And His sweet voice obey.'

"For the first time he said it through without a mistake. Then he kissed his mother, and skipped away, and she never saw him well again. . . .

"And so the end began. . . .

"On Friday morning when the doctor came he told her she might go at last. . . . To see Baby lying so white and pinched and wasted was a terrible shock, as she had never even thought of him as being seriously ill. He looked up in his old bright, sweet way. . . .

"Through the day many painful things had to be done to him. He held his mother's hands tight, and though he quivered with pain he never cried, saying afterwards: 'Mother, am I brave—as brave as a soldier? as brave as a soldier in battle?' His mother said: 'You are my own little soldier boy.' 'Oh no,

Mother ! soldiers die, and I'm not dead.'

"To be brave was his idea all through to the end ; and all his life—pluck and bravery, sweet, manly gentleness, and tender consideration for others—was shown when he lay dying.

"He often begged his mother and his nurses to lie down, 'cos you must be so tired.' He himself had had no sleep for forty hours, and was worn with fever and weariness and constant sickness. Sometimes his mother lay down on the nurse's bed beside the crib ; once he was so afraid that the pillowslip wasn't quite fresh, and did not like to see his mother lying on it. He was always so clean and tidy and methodical, and everything in his little life seemed to come before him when he was dying.

"All through the long last day and night he talked incessantly, owing to the fever. In the afternoon his mind began to wander, and sometimes he thought he was amongst

the hills, and cried: 'Oh, Nursey, I'm so tired! take me home—take me home!' He often thought he was at the foot of a hill, and couldn't go up, and got frightened; but his mother always told him that she and his 'Nursey' were going to help him up, and that soothed him. Though he was often wandering he always understood when they answered. Then he would look round the room, pointing, and saying: 'Lovely pictures!' (Two days before his illness, he had been taken to the 'Song School,' and probably he thought he was there.)

"When Dr —— came back the second time, and before he went away, he went up to Baby, and said: 'Well, good-bye!' 'Good-bye,' said Baby in his clear, high voice, holding out his little hand. When he went out Baby said: 'That doctor has a white moustache and white hair. Isn't he a kind doctor to give me ice?' (He had bags of ice on his head and body.) He was so grateful for little pieces of ice to eat which were given him, and kept

trying to get pieces out of the bag on his head to give to everybody, as he had found it so comforting himself.

“Once he said: ‘Mother, aren’t bulls awfully kind to give us nice milk?’ ‘Don’t you think it’s the cows that give us milk?’ ‘Oh no, Mother; it’s the kind bulls.’ (He loved anything masculine and wild.) . . .

“Sometimes, when he thought those with him would be tired, he would say: ‘*I’m* not tired—only just a little ill.’

“His bravery and pluck and sweet courtesy never left him, and he always thanked us for anything we tried to do to help him. . . . Another time, when he had something painful done to him, and his mother told him it was to try to make him better, ‘Yes,’ he said kindly; ‘I know you’re trying to make me better.’ He would try to turn round for those working at him with injecting-needles, while his mother held his hands. Once, when a very hot fomentation was put on his body, he said: ‘When people are very ill they have hot poultices.’ He made

no cry or complaint, though he always had a great horror of poultices. His great idea was to be brave all through; and the doctors and nurses said they had never seen anything like it; and his perfect unselfishness and thoughtfulness for everyone except himself were so touching.

“Once in the night, when his mother was sitting beside him holding his hands, she said: ‘Everyone loves my little boy.’ ‘Yes,’ he said; ‘and Jesus loves everybody.’ . . .

“About nine o’clock Violet came to say ‘Good-night’ to him. He knew her perfectly, and when she was just going out at the door he turned round, and said in his sweet, clear voice: ‘Good-night, Violet.’ She never saw him again.

“Once in the long last night, when his own nurse and his mother were beside him, one at each side of his crib, he pulled down his mother’s face, and kissed her over and over again, and stroked her face, as he so

often used to do, and seemed to feel he would never let her go. And then he flung his dear, little wasted arm round his nurse's neck, and tried to squeeze her tight, as he so often did. They felt then, though he did not know he was dying, that it was his good-bye to those who had given him so much love, and whom he had loved so dearly.

"As the night wore on he began to whisper a great deal, often pointed upwards, and sometimes said: 'It's very light!' though the gas was kept low." (Once he asked: "Is this my right hand?" and then pointed up with it, saying: "It gets lighter and lighter!")

"Then, as he was becoming unconscious, he once more clasped his dear, little wasted hands, and said in a clear though gasping voice: 'Thank you, Jesus, for giving us nice food. For Jesus' sake. Amen'—so clear and loud that they heard his 'Amen' on the stairs.

"And then the little gasping sighs began.

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**. . . His father repeated a verse of his prayer,
ending :**

**‘Take me, when I die, to heaven,
Happy there with Thee to dwell.’**

**and the little sighs got fainter and
fainter. And so he sighed out his sweet
life. . . .**

‘And Jesus called a little child unto Him.’”

CHAPTER IV

ASLEEP

"The child sweetly rests
Whom nothing molests,
Received in mercy amongst the Lamb's guests."
From an Old Moravian Hymn.

CONTINUED from the Record, with notes added :

"They brought Baby down to the drawing-room, and there he lay in his crib till Tuesday, with the dear little hands, crossed on his breast, clasping a sprig of lily of the valley, and his little watering-can beside him. Then people began to come—Dr ——, who had loved our little boy, bringing bunches of pink azalea and lily of the valley. Baby looked so sweet and peaceful lying among a garden of white flowers, with his hair brushed from his beautiful brow. He looked much older, more like a child of

seven. The fever had wasted him, but he had that look of calm dignity, and also, I felt, the look of one who had come through much and conquered." . . .

In church on Sunday morning they sang, in remembrance of Baby, his hymn : "Now the day is over," and the children there were told why this evening hymn was chosen to be sung in the morning.

The little boy's grand-uncle, then eighty-eight, walked every day from his house, more than three miles away, and sat for an hour or so by the body of the child, thinking "the long thoughts of age." One day he left a little verse, by Coleridge, which, he said, had been ringing in his mind :

" Ere sin could blight, or sorrow fade,
Death came with friendly care ;
The opening bud to heaven conveyed,
And bade it blossom there."

I remember how the picture that the little boy had gazed on a few weeks earlier, of the Angel of Love with the Cup of Death and Life for partaking, was set there

amongst the flowers above his crib ; and afterwards it was placed, between tall lilies, on the altar-like table covered with white linen, over against his coffin. On this table was the hymn - book, open at the hymn "Now the day is over." Here also were set his copper watering-can and the pearly shell, his last playthings ; and the ivory and ebony crucifix taken from his breast when the little, dear form of Baby was lifted from his crib and laid in his coffin. Pretty, and such as a child would like, looked the cheerful oak, with its white and silver, and the name, ever precious, engraved.

On the Tuesday morning, before the last giving up of our four and a half years' joy to be laid in the ground, his mother asked his nurse to put some lily of the valley in his folded hands from herself, "for he had been so much to her from his birth" ; and the maids each put a bunch of violets at his feet ; and three white tulips, from his three most beloved, were laid on his breast.

Then all was closed from sight, and made

fast, his father doing the work with his own hands.

Eleven friends of his father came to the house for the funeral, and the little boy's friend, Mr M., took the service. "The Lord is my Shepherd" was read (the first four verses), and the Gospel narrative of the children embraced by Christ, and the verse: "Even so it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish." A petition remembered from the prayer was this: "May we all, like our little friend, be good soldiers of Jesus Christ." Then were read most of the verses of the hymn "Now the day is over," ending:

"Through the long night-watches
May Thine angels spread
Their white wings about me,
Watching round my bed.

When the morning wakens
Then may I arise
Pure and fresh and sinless
In Thy holy eyes."

Amen.

“The little coffin was lying on trestles in the window. On the head of it was a wreath of violets and a spray of lily of the valley from poor little Violet, and in the centre a cross of lovely white flowers from his Mother, and loose tulip buds from his Father, and lovely red and white roses from G. and N.

“And then they came, and carried Baby downstairs for the last time.

“They put him in his Grandfather’s carriage, and his Father and Mother were beside him, and then they took him to —— (the place of burial). It is a quiet, sunny spot. The grave was all lined with ivy, and looked so pretty, and a sweet, quiet bed for our little boy. . . .

“The tulip buds were thrown over him, and then all those others who came to the funeral left. . . .”

And when I used to go sometimes to the nursery it was pitiful to find the one child there, reading or trying to play — “p’etending things,” as she said — still keeping that baby-like word. In the days that followed the death of Baby I used to find the forlorn little sister drawing pictures full of angels. I have one of those drawings now. The foreground has two flowers—a snowdrop and a violet—growing a little apart from each other; behind each plant an angel is standing; between the plants, in the centre of the picture, an angel is seated on a throne, and from one side another is approaching. In the air above are ten angels flying, in different directions. One of them, coming downward, is bearing a trumpet — “The trumpet is too big,” said the child. Another angel, flying upward, is carrying “a person.” On the back of the paper is printed in a childish hand, perhaps as the beginning of some little poem: “OH, WEEP NOT.”

I remember hearing in that time, before her eighth birthday, in the weeks after Baby's death, of the mysteries brooded over in childish trouble, questions unspoken ("because I thought they would be too difficult for you to answer, Daddy") till in an evening once they broke into utterance: "How was God made? Did He make Himself?" "Why did God make lions?" Old questions!—

"Tiger, tiger, burning bright,
In the watches of the night,

Did He who made the lamb make thee?"

"I beheld, and lo in the midst of the throne . . . stood a Lamb as it had been slain."

"All in the April evening
April airs were abroad,
The sheep with their little lambs
Passed me by on the road.

The sheep with their little lambs
Passed me by on the road:
All in the April evening
I thought on the Lamb of God."

"The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall be their Shepherd, and

shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Is there any other answer for the heart that arises to the questioning of Death?

Later on came those long summer days for the child at the country house (not again High Mains), with its flower garden walks, sweet with carnations and roses, its stretches of grass, and high over-arching trees. There on the lawn was the drooping willow, where on many an afternoon "the fairies" celebrated, with festivals of crowning, the achievement through hazards and woundings of chivalrous service — "great deeds," as the child always called those adventures of her fancy. One little fairy maid with diverse names had to undertake them all — a white-froaked child, whose voice I remember in low intoning, when a fairy, returning, had fallen in death by the doorway: "She must be crowned. She has not done the great deed, but she

has done what she could. She must be crowned." Often in that garden by the sea, between the times of our play, we two would go walking about together, conversing on things as they came; and while we thus wandered by sunny or shady paths, now and again in her quiet way, and as though with some effort to overcome the restraint of spirit that cherishes sacred things, the child would speak of the brother who had been so great a part in her life and was by her so well beloved. "Baby and I used to," she would begin; and then would be told in the soft voice, gravely sweet, a memory of some favourite play in the years gone by.

One felt, indeed, that in depths of spirit underneath the gaiety of the passing hours the child had entered into a sense of loss abiding, although from the beginning that was most realised in thought for those others in the circle of home and love. "It's a pity that people can't die in families," said this true mourner—thinking, no doubt,

of a far-off "some day" and "a family in heaven," no longer broken.

Sacred as is the earliest life of the heart, I think I should leave in this place of memorial some fragrance of that sweet remembrance and quiet sorrow—a bunch of unfading rosemary, a sprig of rue, clasped by the little maid who belongs to the past.

And although there cannot be recorded here for Baby's requiem any of the few written words of love beyond knowing, with its lasting bereavement, its seasons, too, of indestructible gladness in knowing the treasure secure from harm, yet I think that it cannot be unfitting to leave at the grave of a child these words of witness from his father, these words of wonder from his mother:—

His father wrote to a friend, who was also a friend of the boy's, and who afterwards of his own accord lent me the letter for this record: "My rowdy little saint has, I think, got from life what it is meant to give. He had not required sorrow or

disillusionment to teach him. 'Brave as a soldier in battle,' he kept his white standard clean ; and though he would always have it that he was wicked, but tried to be good, and would be good when he was big, 'cos big people are meant to be good,' I know that his humble little heart had some of the happiness of victory—temptation overcome and self clearly put from the first place."

His mother's letter to my mother telling the story of her little boy's dying ended thus : "I tried to make him good and brave and unselfish, but I never thought that he would be so perfectly Christ-like."

TO THE LITTLE BOY

FROM HIS FATHER

"My little clattering saint, whose happy noise
A week ago re-echoed on the stairs,
Whose kiss could woo the weary mind from cares,
Whose laughter made the desolate heart rejoice,
Why should Death fix on you his envious choice?
Why when the stricken and the sad he spares,
Lay on your lips his finger unawares
And hush the innocent music of your voice?"

Ah! you had learned so early—not through tears —
To lay your will down gladly, and your life,
That earth had nothing more for you, my sweet;
Life is not perfected by length of years:
And your dear life is laid, unsoiled by strife,
A pure and perfect lily at God's feet."

CHAPTER VI

A STAR OF BETHLEHEM

"Joy of my life while left me here !
And still my Love !
How in thy absence thou dost steere
Me from above !
A life well lead
This truth commends,
With quick or dead
It never ends.

God's Saints are shining lights : who stays
Here long must passe
O'er dark hills, swift streames, and steep ways
As smooth as glasse.

They are indeed our Pillar-fires,
Seen as we go ;
They are that Citie's shining spires
We travell to."

HENRY VAUGHAN.

SOMEHOW, when the little boy was here,
he seemed to win from many beyond the
bounds of his home an interest and a love

immediate and lasting and very personal. Through all the pretty play of life and change that belongs to the moods of childhood, the ways and speech and looks of the child expressed some character of constancy, some simple harmony of being: the presence of a little spirit understanding, responsive, sweetly earnest, going on his chosen way. For the thoughts of love that cherish remembrance through the gathering abundant years, the feeblest touch of an infant life is enough, but I think that it must partly be owing to this strongly distinctive impression given by the little boy that the *actual* memory of him is so unfading. I have taken longer to write his life, in my larger record, than he took to live it (the task beloved has often been laid aside for long); and still, after those years in different countries, it is almost as if I had been with him yesterday. Others, who knew him less well, have spoken, long after the child's departure, of the strangely continuing clearness of their impressions and

of the sense of "missing" that did not grow less.

But more strange to me is the way in which the child has been thought of—as if in a glad and tender reception and harbouring—by some who have never seen him, and even by some who only after his death had been told a little about him. The letters in that spring from those who had known him make a treasure of comfort laid up in the heart—words of love and living praise and poignant sorrow, gold and frankincense and myrrh from the wisdom of human kindness. "The sweetest, gentlest, most heavenly," "wise," "friendly," "a gallant child"—such phrases as these linger in memory as love's aroma, with one assured sentence that pleased me greatly: "He would have grown up a sweet, noble boy." It is rather, however, from the letters of people who never had seen the child that I wish to preserve a few sentences in this place.

A friend of mine, to whom I used often

to send accounts of the children, wrote in answer to the letter that told of the little boy's death: "I send this wonderful heart-piercing letter back at once. He was—I always felt him so—the sweetest, bravest, most courteous, innocent-wise, little human darling—'half angel,' and yet all boy. . . . I cannot say how lovely I think this infant's holy, fearless departure."

And again later on.—"The precious little spirit had the promise and potency of life in its brief manifestation as truly and as evidently as any saint of fourscore." "I think over his words so often, and they grow and grow on me, not only as his sayings, but as the marvel and wonder of such an exquisite blossom on the great tree of humanity. He is dead; but he is alive for evermore, through his very death, which sums up the sweetness and perfectness of his early flower and fragrance."

Two other letters I quote, because they were written, not to any of us, but by people unknown, who had seen some short

account of the child through my friend. One conveys the writer's thanks "for those lovely records of the dear child Bayard—'sans peur et sans reproche'—who being dead yet speaketh." The other says: "We read the sweet record of that lovely, steadfast spirit, and were stirred to fresh courage by its message of strength and love. So to come in touch, even for a moment, with the realities does flood one's path with light."

Both amongst those who knew the child and those who, here and in England, heard something of him, men and women have spoken of uplifting and help from his living and his dying. In Italy, too, were people who asked to be told about him—a fellow-traveller now and again, a Tuscan peasant. I remember the tender smile of a woman I knew over the garden picture and her "Pare un angiolino!"—I remember the courtly old soldier from Cornwall, whose eyes filled with tears when he heard of the little boy's desire to be brave as a soldier in battle: "Did he say *that*?" And even

from the pictured face of the child as he lay after death a stranger found—in its calmness of strength and achievement and heavenly sweetness—a message consoling, a heightened assurance of the peace and fulfilment beyond this earthly warfare.

Perhaps it is the child's death even more than his life that makes him a little guest in so many hearts.

I think S. Barnabas is the saint of whom tradition tells that he went about the world carrying with him the book of the Gospel from the hand of St Matthew, preaching what was written therein. And when he met one sick, or oppressed in spirit, he laid the Evangel on the heart of that man or woman, and straightway the sorrowful one was healed. A "son of consolation" he was. And yet not only "with pen and ink" is the Word of Life made known to us. In the past "He dwelt among us; we beheld His glory," and still in these His little ones may be found again some of that grace and truth of His

abiding — “the lineaments of Gospell-bookes.”

A child—the memory of a child—seems a thing of small account in the world; yet here, in this great, achieving, glad, and sorrowful world of living and dying, are simple needs, to which the faith and courage of one very young may minister; and here, no doubt, are places and hours of silence for listening to the prophecy, unconscious and sweet—a “still, small voice”—of the earliest musings of the soul. Yes; even the pictured face of a child who is dead may come like a benediction, and the touch of his spirit help to keep open the doors of heaven, from whence the light shall fall.

Surely thus the Divine Image Itself may be seen, in measure, but convincingly, in many and many a little child; and to see it is not the making of an idol, but the receiving of a sacrament—“Emmanuel: God with us.” For forth from Him, the Father of Lights, come all the ordered powers, the glad surprises, the sweet in-

fluences of light. "Canst *thou* bind the sweet influences of Pleiades or loose the bands of Orion? Seek Him that made the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning."

Not to the little Forerunner only, but to every child, according to the grace of the spirit of childhood, it might be said: "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways."

"Where your treasure is, there shall your heart be also." In thinking of one of such children, in remembering this little child whom our hearts have received, one thinks, indeed, on things true and pure and lovely and of good report, things of manly valour and of human praise. And, doubtless, in these delectable regions one might find oneself near him even now. For us who have still the same path of life and death to follow there is left continually the choice of this high companionship of travel: to partake

of the spirit of love, the spirit of faith, the spirit of effort, the spirit of joy which led him onward through his sweet years of our earthly road. Therein, might one not make of life and death, as he did, a song? beginning the days, as they come, with the infantine vision: "Look! oh, look!" reinforcing the failure of flesh and heart in laborious hours with the steadfast "I ought" of a loyal spirit; passing through all the dyings of nature with the child's ever-rising response of praise: "Amen. Amen."

Little child beloved! we remember and we would hold by your wisdom and faith that your Lord, though we cannot see Him, is looking down now, on this world which to us is so full of strangeness; we would clasp your sweet assurance that He by whose "Good Spirit" within us our hearts experience love, Himself "loves everyone." And so may the grace and the love and the fellowship divine be with us all now, and round about us, keeping together the people on earth and the people in heaven. *Amen.*

CHAPTER VII

THE LITTLE BOY'S GARDEN

"Now as they were going and talking, they espied a boy feeding his father's sheep . . . and as he sat by himself he sung. Hark, said Mr Greatheart, to what the shepherd's boy saith. So they hearkened, and he said :

He that is down need fear no fall,

He that is low no pride ;

He that is humble ever shall

Have God to be his guide."

The Pilgrim's Progress.

THE grave of Baby is in a quiet, sunny terrace of the cemetery. A little stair leads up the bank to a narrow pathway bordering a strip of grass half hidden from the main grounds below by small trees and shrubs, and the few graves here are mostly, I think, those of children. Baby's is close to one of a little girl : three years is the age engraved on her white Celtic cross, with its "Suffer little children to come unto Me." On the

grave of this child, unknown in life, the little boy, when he passed this way with his nurse and sister, used to place a flower—with what tender carefulness I can well imagine—and once when he had not a flower he laid down, instead, a piece of pink paper.

Baby's memorial stone of white marble is of Greek design—a slightly tapering slab, standing erect, bearing the inscription in black letters. It is crowned by a kind of pediment, and here are carved those early symbols of the Greek hope and the Christian faith: the butterfly that betokens the soul's immortality, the fish that tells of the soul's restoration. (A little butterfly flying, and a very little fish diving into the depths, to reappear again, no doubt, on the crystal-line waves—how the little boy himself would have loved them!) Underneath the cornice is engraved the verse: *He turneth the shadow of death into the morning*. It was chosen with thoughts, perhaps, going back to that morning sunlight which rose and streamed through the nursery window on

the crib of the child as he passed to "another morn than ours," with thoughts likewise of the Morning looked for in the fulness of the years, when there shall be no more death. Below this text from the herdman prophet is the name of the child, with the days of his birth and death. Then on the lower slab is Ben Jonson's elegy :

"It is not growing like a tree
In bulk doth make man better be :
Or standing long, an oak three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere.
A lily of a day
Is fairer far in May ;
Although it fall and die that night,
It was the plant and flower of Light.
In small proportions we just beauties see,
And in short measures life may perfect be."

In the ground immediately behind the stone there stands a birch-tree, its small leaves waving in play of silvery green with the summer breezes, the upright, slender stem holding a hope in its warmth of earth-browns and greys and living whiteness even on a winter day. Close beside it there rises a twisted, homely hawthorn-tree, and on the

other side a little tree of holly is growing, with some laurel bushes near by. One is glad to have them all gathered there on the high-set, lonely bank—branches of the dear, familiar white blossom of May and June, fragrant with kindly memories for the sleeping children; bright red berries in winter—a tree for their Christmas Eve (but first for the birds); and always some evergreen growing quiet, for the enduring praise and love of the little saints and for life that has no end.

To this lily bed in “the Buried Gardens”¹ one goes now and then to look and to think of the sweet four years and a half of Baby’s stay. And at festival seasons bright flowers are brought, because he loved them; and this is still his little garden plot of humility in the green earth which gave so much of gladness to him.—

Surely where he has gone there is loveliness everlasting and love all availing.

¹ The name first given to this place by the baby Violet.

IN THE COUNTRY OF THE HEART

Our little dying Love restored his flowers
With "real water" : grave, he carries still
His shining garden-can, and careful showers
Its treasure, scooped from some celestial rill.

Things small and young our Sweetest would caress :
And now amid the Hills of Peace, behold !
A Lamb of Love's Immortal gentleness
His tender arms adoringly enfold.

Here once our Saint his mirthful race forsook,
To tell how Christ is bending down His eyes :
There his faith warbles of the upward look
From far-off love that waits the call : *Arise !*

ENVOI

AVE ATQUE VALE

SWEETHEART! sweetheart! we have said "good-bye" because you are taken home; but, perhaps, to wish you "good-night" would not be fitting. You were never afraid of night nor of darkness, and in the Eternal Love, if now you were laid to rest for a while, untroubled would be your sleep. But we think that with you, returning unwearied and pure, it is already morning in the vision of Him who is the Bright and Morning Star. "To him that overcometh I will give the Morning Star."

Already our hearts are hearing your voice of song. There is a silence above us, for still to our night the silence is appointed; while you, who on earth were so eager to do the counsels divine, are about the works of the Heavenly Father by ways that are

now to us unknown and that seem far off. Yet sometimes in dreams of thought it is almost as though through the lower silence we were listening early to the sound of your singing and the stir of those old "white designs" of your play. "We sleep, but our heart waketh."

When they who held you their very own, and who hold you their very dear, have passed beyond the shadow of Death, shall they find you beside them as, one by one, they waken where men shall be satisfied with the blessed likeness of the Love Immortal? On earth His likeness was manifested once in a little child—Dayspring visiting our darkness—and we think that it must have been still in you, as in all the saints, some lowly indwelling of the Guest all fair that lifted our satisfied hearts to remembrance as they looked on your peace. Therefore it well may prove that with other beholdings — strange and high — in the kingdom of the Morning Star, this little, familiar and sweet one shall be found by

awakening eyes, shall be given to practised hearts, as before.

But be it as it may in these earliest lights of the dawning, surely when the noontide of the all-restoring, various, abiding Day at last arises, and the harmonies ordained before the foundation of the world achieve their fulfilment, you, whom Love once led to us here to attune and increase our song, shall be brought again by Love to live with your own in the great Community the life of praise made perfect.

Now and always you are with God: we shall see you when and in what manner "it is meant."

Meanwhile may we also finish our work.

LAUS DEO

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